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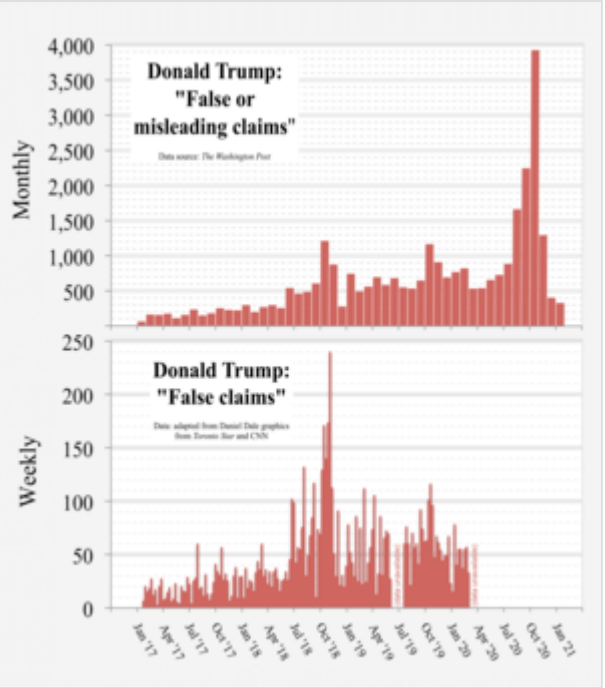
False or misleading statements by Donald Trump

Donald Trump has made tens of thousands of false or misleading claims, including during his first and second terms as President of the United States. Fact-checkers at *The Washington Post* documented 30,573 false or misleading claims during his first presidential term, an average of 21 per day.[1][5][6][7] The *Toronto Star* tallied 5,276 false claims from January 2017 to June 2019, an average of six per day.[2] Commentators and fact-checkers have described Trump's mendacity as unprecedented in American politics,[13] and the consistency of falsehoods as a distinctive part of his business and political identities.[14] Scholarly analysis of Trump's tweets found significant evidence of an intent to deceive.[15]



Fact-checkers from *The Washington Post*[1] (top, monthly), the *Toronto Star*[2] and CNN[3][4] (bottom, weekly) compiled data on "false or misleading claims", and "false claims", respectively. The peaks corresponded in late 2018 to the midterm elections, in late 2019 to his impeachment inquiry, and in late 2020 to the presidential election. The *Post* reported 30,573 false or misleading claims in four years,[1] an average of more than 20.9 per day.

Many news organizations initially resisted describing Trump's falsehoods as lies, but began to do so in June 2019.[16] *The Washington Post* said his frequent repetition of claims he knew to be false amounted to a campaign based on disinformation.[17] Steve Bannon, Trump's 2016 presidential campaign CEO and chief strategist during the first seven months of Trump's first presidency, said that the press, rather than Democrats, was Trump's primary adversary and "the way to deal with them is to flood the zone with shit."[18][19] In February 2025, a public relations CEO stated that the "flood the zone" tactic was designed to make sure no single action or event stands out above the rest by having them occur at a rapid pace, thus preventing the public from keeping up and preventing controversy or outrage over a specific action or event.[20]

As part of their attempts to overturn the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Trump and his allies repeatedly falsely claimed there had been massive election fraud and that Trump had won the election.[7] Their effort was characterized by some as an implementation of Hitler's "big lie" propaganda technique.[21]

In June 2023, a criminal grand jury indicted Trump on one count of making "false statements and representations", specifically by hiding subpoenaed classified documents from his own attorney who was trying to find and return them to the government.[22] In August 2023, 21 of Trump's falsehoods about the

2020 election were listed in his Washington, D.C. criminal indictment,[23] and 27 were listed in his Georgia criminal indictment.[24]

Veracity and politics

Many academics and observers who study the American political scene have called Trump unique or highly unusual in his lying and its effect on political discourse. "It has long been a truism that politicians lie," wrote Carole McGranahan for the *American Ethnologist* in 2017, but "Donald Trump is different". He is the most "accomplished and effective liar" to have ever participated in American politics; moreover, his lying has reshaped public discourse so that "the frequency, degree, and impact of lying in politics are now unprecedented".[9]

Historian Douglas Brinkley stated that U.S. presidents have occasionally "lied or misled the country," but none were a "serial liar" like Trump.[25] Donnel Stern, writing in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* in 2019, declared: "We expect politicians to stretch the truth. But Trump is a whole different animal," because Trump "lies as a policy", and "will say anything" to satisfy his supporters or himself.[26]

Heidi Taksdal Skjeseth, writing for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in 2017, described how lies have "always been an integral part of politics". However, Trump was "delivering untruths on an unprecedented scale", during his campaign and presidency. Skjeseth commented that no one in French politics was comparable to Trump in his provision of falsehoods.[10]

Jeremy Adam Smith wrote that "lying is a feature, not a bug, of Trump's campaign and presidency."[27] Thomas B. Edsall wrote "Donald Trump can lay claim to the title of most prodigious liar in the history of the presidency."[27] George C. Edwards III wrote: "Donald Trump tells more untruths than any previous president. There is no one that is a close second."[27]

Use of repetition

Trump is conscious of the value of repetition to get his lies believed. He demonstrated this knowledge when he instructed Stephanie Grisham, his White House press secretary, to use his method of lying: "As long as you keep repeating something, it doesn't matter what you say."[28]

Trump effectively uses the Big lie technique's method of repetition to exploit the illusory truth effect, a tendency to believe false information to be correct after repeated exposure.[29] Research has studied Trump's use of the effect.

> New research published in Public Opinion Quarterly reveals a correlation between the number of times President Donald Trump repeated falsehoods during his presidency and misperceptions among Republicans, and that the repetition effect was stronger on the beliefs of people who consume information primarily from right-leaning news outlets.[30]

The Washington Post fact-checker created a new category of falsehoods in 2018, the "Bottomless Pinocchio," for falsehoods repeated at least twenty times (so often "that there can be no question the politician is aware his or her facts are wrong"). Trump was the only politician who met the standard of the category, with 14 statements that immediately qualified. According to the *Post* Trump repeated some

falsehoods so many times he had effectively engaged in disinformation.[17] *CNN* fact-checker Daniel Dale notes that news outlets may initially check a false claim by Trump, but are unlikely to continue pointing out that it's false, "especially because he is constantly mixing in dozens of new lies that require time and resources to address. And so, by virtue of shameless perseverance, Trump often manages to outlast most of the media's willingness to correct any particular falsehood".[31]

Business career

Real estate

Within years of expanding his father's property development business into Manhattan in the early 1970s, Trump attracted the attention of *The New York Times* for his brash and controversial style, with one real-estate financier observing in 1976, "His deals are dramatic, but they haven't come into being. So far, the chief beneficiary of his creativity has been his public image." Der Scutt, the prominent architect who designed Trump Tower, said in 1976, "He's extremely aggressive when he sells, maybe to the point of overselling. Like, he'll say the convention center is the biggest in the world, when it really isn't. He'll exaggerate for the purpose of making a sale."[32] A 1984 *GQ* profile of Trump quoted him stating he owned the whole block on Central Park South and Avenue of the Americas. *GQ* noted that the two buildings Trump owned were likely less than a sixth of the block.[33]

The New York state attorney general, Letitia James, opened a civil investigation into Trump's business practices, especially regarding inflated property values.[34] She joined the Manhattan district attorney's office in a criminal investigation into possible property tax fraud by the Trump Organization.[35]

Other investments and debt

In 1984, Trump posed as his own spokesman John Barron and made false assertions of his wealth to secure a higher ranking on the Forbes 400 list of wealthy Americans, including by claiming he owned over 90% of his family's business. Audio recordings of these claims were released in 2018 by journalist Jonathan Greenberg.[36]

Following the October 1987 stock market crash, Trump claimed to press that he had taken no losses and sold all his stock a month before. Per SEC filings he owned large stakes in some companies during the crash. *Forbes* calculated that Trump had lost at least $19 million related to Resorts International stock,[37][38] while journalist Gwenda Blair noted $22 million from stock in the Alexander's department store chain.[39]

Challenging estimates of his net worth he considered too low, in 1989 Trump said he had very little debt.[40] Reuters reported Trump owed $4 billion (~$8.25 billion in 2023) to more than 70 banks at the beginning of 1990.[41] In 1997, Ben Berzin Jr., who had been tasked with recovering some of the $100 million (~$176 million in 2023) his bank had lent Trump, said "During the time that I dealt with Mr. Trump, I was continually surprised by his mastery of situational ethics. He does not seem to be able to differentiate between fact and fiction."[42]

A 1998 *New York Observer* article reported that Jerry Nadler "flatly calls Mr. Trump a 'liar'," quoting Nadler stating, "Trump got $6 million [in federal money] in the dead of night when no one knew anything about it" by slipping a provision into a $200 billion federal transportation bill.[43] During a 2005 deposition in a defamation lawsuit he initiated about his worth, Trump said: "My net worth fluctuates, and it goes up and down with markets and with attitudes and with feelings, even my own feelings ... and that can change rapidly from day to day".[44]

Philanthropy

David Fahrenthold investigated Trump's claims about his charitable giving and found little evidence the claims are true.[45][46] Following Fahrenthold's reporting, the Attorney General of New York opened an inquiry into the Donald J. Trump Foundation's fundraising practices, and issued a "notice of violation" ordering the Foundation to stop raising money in New York.[47] The Foundation had to admit it engaged in self-dealing practices to benefit Trump, his family, and businesses.[48]

Sports

In 1983, when Trump was forming a business relationship with the New Jersey Generals football team, he spoke about the team at a public forum. "He promised the signing of superstar players he would never sign. He announced the hiring of immortal coaches he would never hire. He scheduled a news conference the next day to confirm all of it, and the next day never came," CNN reporter Keith Olbermann recalled in 2021. Following the forum, Trump approached Olbermann and, rather than waiting for questions, began speaking into Olbermann's microphone about "an entirely *different* set of coaches and players than he had from the podium."[49]

In 1987, during testimony regarding an antitrust case between the United States Football League (USFL) and the National Football League (NFL), Trump stated that he had had a meeting with NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle years earlier where Rozelle offered him an NFL franchise in exchange for keeping the USFL a spring-time league and not initiating a lawsuit with the NFL.[50][51] Rozelle denied having made this offer and stated he was opposed to Trump becoming an NFL team owner, with a person present at the meeting between the two stating that Rozelle told Trump, "As long as I or my heirs are involved in the NFL, you will never be a franchise owner in the league".[52][53]

In 1996, Trump claimed he wagered $1 million (~$1.79 million in 2023) on 20-to-1 odds boxing match between Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson. The *Las Vegas Sun* reported that "while everyone is careful not to call Trump a liar," no one in a position to know about such a sizable wager was aware of it.[54]

In a 2004 book, *The Games Do Count: America's Best and Brightest on the Power of Sports*, Trump claimed to have hit "the winning home run" when his school played Cornwall High School in 1964, garnering a headline "TRUMP HOMERS TO WIN THE GAME" in a local newspaper. Years later, a journalist discovered that Trump's high school did not play Cornwall that year, nor did any such local headline surface. A classmate recalled a separate incident in high school in which Trump had hit "a blooper the fielders misplayed," sending the ball "just over the third baseman's head," yet Trump insisted to him: "I want you to remember this: I hit the ball out of the ballpark!"[55]

After purchasing the Trump National Golf Club in 2009, Trump erected The River of Blood monument between the 14th hole and 15th tee with a plaque describing the blood of Civil War casualties that turned the river red. No such event ever took place at this site.[56]

Trump has repeatedly claimed he is an 18-time club championship winner at several clubs, none of which can be positively confirmed, and 16 of which were not official or all-member club championships. All these wins have been recorded at golf clubs owned or managed by The Trump Organization. Professional and amateur golfers, such as Buddy Marucci, have claimed that Trump would threaten to revoke the membership of anyone who won against him, thus allowing him to win club championships with little competition. Trump has claimed to have won the Trump International Golf Club West Palm Beach Club Championship in 1999, before the club was officially opened to membership,[57] and the 2023 Senior Club Championship at the same course, despite not being present for the first day.[58]

Other

In 1973, the *New York Times* ran its first profile of Trump, stating he had "graduated first in his class from the Wharton School of Finance" five years earlier.[59] However, in 1984, the *New York Times Magazine* shed light by pointing out that "the commencement program from 1968 does not list him as graduating with honors of any kind."[60]

After three Trump casino executives died in a 1989 helicopter crash, Trump claimed that he, too, had nearly boarded the helicopter. The claim was denied 30 years later by a former vice president of the Trump Organization.[61] Promoting his Trump University after its formation in 2004, Trump asserted he would handpick all its instructors. Michael Sexton, former president of the venture, stated in a 2012 deposition that Trump selected none.[62]

During a 2018 interview, television personality Billy Bush recounted a conversation he had had with Trump, in which he refuted Trump's repeated false claims that *The Apprentice* was the top-rated television program in America. Bush recalled Trump responding, "Billy, look, you just tell them and they believe it. That's it: you just tell them and they believe. They just do."[63]

Perceptions

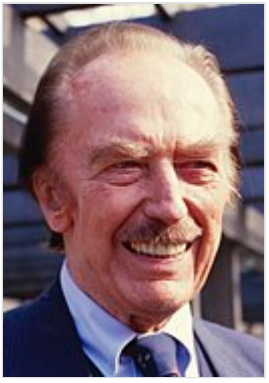
Alair Townsend, a former budget director and deputy mayor of New York during the 1980s, and a former publisher of *Crain's New York Business*, said "I wouldn't believe Donald Trump if his tongue were notarized."[37] Leona Helmsley later used this line as her own when she spoke about Trump in her 1990 interview in *Playboy* magazine.[64]

Trump often appeared in New York tabloid newspapers. Recalling her career with *New York Post*'s Page Six column, Susany Mulcahy told *Vanity Fair* in 2004, "I wrote about him a certain amount, but I actually would sit back and be amazed at how often people would write about him in a completely gullible way. He was a great character, but he was full of crap 90 percent of the time." (Trump told the magazine, "I agree with her 100 percent.")[65][66] Barbara Res, a former Trump Organization vice president who worked for Trump from 1978 until 1998, said "he would tell the staff his ridiculous lies, and after a while, no one believed a single word he would say".[67]

In *The Art of the Deal*

Tony Schwartz is a journalist who ghostwrote *Trump: The Art of the Deal*.[68] In July 2016, Schwartz was interviewed by Jane Mayer for articles in *The New Yorker*.[69][68] He described Trump highly unfavorably, and described how he came to regret writing *The Art of the Deal*.[69][68][70] When Schwartz wrote it, he created the phrase "truthful hyperbole", as an "artful euphemism" to describe Trump's "loose relationship with the truth".[68] This passage provides context, written in Trump's voice: "I play to people's fantasies ... People want to believe that something is the biggest and the greatest and the most spectacular. I call it truthful hyperbole. It's an innocent form of exaggeration—and it's a very effective form of promotion".[71] He said Trump "loved the phrase".[68][72]

Schwartz said "deceit" is never "innocent". He also said, "'Truthful hyperbole' is a contradiction in terms. It's a way of saying, 'It's a lie, but who cares?'"[68] Schwartz repeated his criticism on *Good Morning America* and *Real Time with Bill Maher*, saying he "put lipstick on a pig".[73]


Donald Trump's father, Fred, c. 1986

Fearing that anti-German sentiments during and after World War II would negatively affect his business, Trump's father, Fred Trump, began claiming Swedish descent.[74][75][76] Both parents of Fred Trump were born and raised in Kallstadt, Kingdom of Bavaria, now part of Germany. The falsehood was repeated by Donald to the press[32][77] and in *The Art of the Deal*,[78][79][76] where he claimed his grandfather, Friedrich Trump, "came here from Sweden as a child".[80] In the same book, Donald said his father was born in New Jersey.[68][81] When asked during his presidency why he upheld the false narrative about his father being Swedish, Trump said, "My father spent a lot of time [in Sweden]. But it was never really something really discussed very much."[82] As president, Trump on at least three occasions claimed his father was born in Germany.[83] Trump's father is of German descent but was born in the Bronx.[76] In one case Trump said his father was "born in a very wonderful place in Germany,"[84] and another time stated, "I was raised by the biggest kraut of them all,"[85] invoking an ethnic slur for a German.[86] *The Guardian* pointed out the irony of Trump supporting the "birtherism" conspiracy theory asserting Barack Obama was born in Africa.[87]

September 11 attacks

On September 11, after at least one of the World Trade Center towers was destroyed, Trump said in an interview with WWOR-TV in New York: "40 Wall Street actually was the second-tallest building in downtown Manhattan, and it was actually, before the World Trade Center, was the tallest—and then, when they built the World Trade Center, it became known as the second tallest, and now it's the tallest."[88] Once the Twin Towers had collapsed, the 71-story Trump Building at 40 Wall Street became the second-tallest building in Lower Manhattan, 25 feet (7.6 m) shorter than the building at 70 Pine Street.[89] Two days after the attack, Trump stood near Ground Zero and told a television station he was paying two hundred of his employees to come "find and identify victims". No record of such work has ever been found. In 2023, he reposted the claim on Truth Social.[90]

At a rally in Columbus, Ohio, in 2015, Trump said "I have a view—a view in my apartment that was specifically aimed at the World Trade Center." He added "and I watched those people jump and I watched the second plane hit ... I saw the second plane hit the building and I said, 'Wow that's unbelievable.'" At the time of the attack, Trump lived in Trump Tower more than four miles (6 km) away from the World Trade Center towers. His campaign did not respond to inquiries about how it was possible for him to see people jumping from that far away.[91]

In another rally in 2015, Trump claimed seeing "thousands and thousands" of Arab Americans in New Jersey cheering during the collapse of the World Trade Center. News organizations like the Associated Press (AP), *The Washington Post*, and *The Star-Ledger* reported rumors of 9/11 celebrations in New Jersey, but they were found to be unfounded, unsourced, or finding that people were memorializing the event. Nobody else was known to remember seeing masses of thousands of people celebrating after 9/11. Furthermore, Trump would not have been able to clearly see people cheering in New Jersey from his residence.[92]

During his 2016 campaign, Trump falsely claimed to have predicted the attacks in his 2000 book *The America We Deserve*, that Osama bin Laden was not well known when the book was published and that it called for the U.S. to "take him out".[93]

2016 presidential campaign

Trump promoted conspiracy theories that have lacked empirical support. These have included "birther" theories that Barack Obama was not born in the US.[94][95][96] In 2011, Trump took credit for the release of Obama's "long-form" birth certificate, while raising doubt about its legitimacy,[97] and in 2016 admitted that Obama was a natural-born citizen from Hawaii.[98] He then falsely stated that Hillary Clinton started the conspiracy theories.[98][99][100]

In 2015, *Boing Boing* reproduced newspaper articles from 1927, which reported Trump's father had been arrested at a Ku Klux Klan march and been discharged.[101] Multiple articles on the incident list Fred Trump's address in Jamaica, Queens,[102] as do the 1930 census[103] and a 1936 wedding announcement.[104] Trump admitted to *The New York Times* that the address was "where my grandmother lived and my father, early on." When asked about the 1927 story, he denied his father had ever lived at that address, and said the arrest "never happened", and, "There was nobody charged."[105]

Within six months of Trump's announcement of his presidential campaign, FactCheck.org declared Trump the "King of Whoppers", stating, "In the 12 years of FactCheck.org's existence, we've never seen his match. He stands out not only for the sheer number of his factually false claims, but also for his brazen refusals to admit error when proven wrong."[106] In 2016, Trump suggested that Ted Cruz's father was involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.[107] He also accused Cruz of stealing the Iowa caucuses during the 2016 Republican Party presidential primaries.[108]

Trump claimed that his father had given him "a small loan of a million dollars," which he used to build "a company that's worth more than $10 billion,"[109] denying Marco Rubio's allegation that he had inherited $200 million.[110] A 2018 *New York Times* exposé on Fred and Donald Trump's finances concludes that Donald "was a millionaire by age 8," and that he had received $413 million (adjusted for inflation) from his father's business empire over his lifetime, including over $60 million ($140 million in 2018 currency) in loans, which were largely unreimbursed.[111]

Trump claimed repeatedly on the campaign trail in 2015 that the actual unemployment rate of around 5% "isn't reflective [of reality] ... I've seen numbers of 24%, I actually saw a number of 42% unemployment". PolitiFact rated this claim "Pants on Fire," its rating for the most egregious falsehoods.[112] Jeremy Adam Smith, writing for the *Greater Good Magazine*, said Trump's falsehoods may be "blue lies," which are "told on behalf of a group, that can actually strengthen the bonds among the members of that group". As a result, he posited, Trump's dishonesty does not lose the support of his political base, even while it "infuriates and confuses almost everyone else".[113][114]

In 2015, Buzzfeed News' Andrew Kaczynski reported that Trump, despite having claimed to have the best memory in the world, had a history of "conveniently forgetting" people or organizations in ways that benefit him. In July 2016, PolitiFact's Linda Qiu pointed out that Trump "seems to suffer bouts of amnesia when it comes to his own statements". Kaczynski and Qiu cited examples of Trump's stating he did not know anything about former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, despite statements showing he clearly knew who Duke was.[115][116] Over three months before the 2016 presidential election, Trump claimed it was going to be "rigged".[117]

In 2016, Trump said repeatedly that he would jail Hillary Clinton. In an interview with Will Cain on Fox & Friends Weekend in June 2024, he denied ever having said so. He blamed his supporters for chanting that message: "I didn't say 'lock her up,' but the people said 'lock her up, lock her up'." He suggested he "could have done it, but I felt it would have been a terrible thing."[118][119] On June 4, he called into Newsmax, claiming he always believed it would have been "terrible to throw the president's wife and the former secretary of state ... into jail", yet this time adding the threat: "It's very possible that it's going to have to happen to them."[120]

Border wall with Mexico

Throughout his campaign and into his presidency, Trump repeatedly claimed the US would "build the wall and make Mexico pay for it". President of Mexico Enrique Peña Nieto said his country would not pay, and never did.[121][122] While not unusual for a campaign promise to not pan out, Trump's insistence Mexico would pay was a central element of his campaign and continued for years. At the 2020 Conservative Political Action Conference, Trump reiterated saying, "Mexico is paying for it and it's every bit—it's better than the wall that was projected."[123]

First term

Fact-checking Trump

Trump's statements as president engaged a host of fact-checkers. Tony Burman wrote: "The falsehoods and distortions uttered by Trump and his senior officials have particularly inflamed journalists and have been challenged—resulting in a growing prominence of 'fact-checkers' and investigative reporting."[124] The situation got worse, as described by Pulitzer Prize-winning Ashley Parker: "President Trump seems to be saying more and more things that aren't true."[125]

Glenn Kessler said in 2017 as a fact-checker for *The Washington Post* there was no comparison between Trump and other politicians. Kessler gave his worst rating to other politicians 20% of the time, but gave it to Trump 64% of the time.[126] Kessler wrote that Trump was the most fact-challenged politician he had

ever encountered and lamented that "the pace and volume of the president's misstatements means that we cannot possibly keep up".[127] Kessler and others have described how Trump's lying has created an alternate reality.[128][129] David Zurawik says we should "just assume Trump's always lying and fact check him backwards"[130] because that's "how to cover a habitual liar".[131]

The Washington Post fact-checker created a new category of falsehoods in 2018, the "Bottomless Pinocchio," for falsehoods repeated at least twenty times (so often "that there can be no question the politician is aware his or her facts are wrong"). Trump was the only politician who met the standard of the category, with 14 statements that immediately qualified. According to *The Washington Post*, Trump repeated some falsehoods so many times he had effectively engaged in disinformation.[17] Glenn Kessler wrote:

> The president keeps going long after the facts are clear, in what appears to be a deliberate effort to replace the truth with his own, far more favorable, version of it. He is not merely making gaffes or misstating things, he is purposely injecting false information into the national conversation.[17]

Professor Robert Prentice summarized the views of many fact-checkers:

> Here's the problem: As fact checker Glenn Kessler noted in August, whereas [Hillary] Clinton lies as much as the average politician, President Donald Trump's lying is "off the charts." No prominent politician in memory bests Trump for spouting spectacular, egregious, easily disproved lies. The birther claim. The vote fraud claim. The attendance at the inauguration claim. And on and on and on. Every fact checker – Kessler, Factcheck.org, Snopes.com, PolitiFact – finds a level of mendacity unequaled by any politician ever scrutinized. For instance, 70 percent of his campaign statements checked by PolitiFact were mostly false, totally false, or "pants on fire" false.[132]

At the end of 2018, Kessler provided a run-down summary of Trump's accelerating rate of false statements during the year:

> Trump began 2018 on a similar pace as last year. Through May, he generally averaged about 200 to 250 false claims a month. But his rate suddenly exploded in June, when he topped 500 falsehoods, as he appeared to shift to campaign mode. He uttered almost 500 more in both July and August, almost 600 in September, more than 1,200 in October and almost 900 in November. In December, Trump drifted back to the mid-200s.[8]

Several major fact-checking sites regularly fact-checked Trump, including:

- PolitiFact,[133] which awarded Trump its "Lie of the Year" in 2015,[134] 2017[135] and 2019.[136]
- FactCheck.org,[137] which dubbed Trump the "King of Whoppers" in 2015.[138]
- *The Washington Post* said in January 2020 that Trump had made more than 16,241 false or misleading claims as president,[139] an average of about 15 such statements per day.

- The *Toronto Star* which said that, as of June 2019, Trump had made 5,276 false statements since his inauguration.[140]

As late as June 2018, the news media were debating whether to use the word "lie" to describe Trump's falsehoods. That month, however, many news organizations, including CNN, *Financial Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The New Yorker*, and *Foreign Policy* began describing some of Trump's false statements as lies. The *Toronto Star* was one of the first outlets to use the word "lie" to describe Trump's statements, and continues to frequently. Some organizations continue to shy away from the term.

On June 5, 2019, Paul Farhi wrote that Glenn Kessler, author of *The Washington Post*'s "Fact Checker" column, had used the word *lie* only once to describe Trump's statements, although he has sometimes used other terminology that implies lying.[16] Since then, *The Washington Post*'s fact-checking team has written the 2020 book *Donald Trump and His Assault on Truth. The President's Falsehoods, Misleading Claims and Flat-Out Lies*.[141][142]

By October 9, 2019, *The Washington Post*'s fact-checking team documented that Trump had "made 13,435 false or misleading claims over 993 days".[143] On October 18, 2019, the *Washington Post* Fact Checker newsletter described the situation:

> A thousand days of Trump.
> We often hear from readers wondering how President Trump's penchant for falsehoods stacks up in comparison to previous presidents. But there is no comparison: Trump exists in a league of his own. Deception, misdirection, gaslighting, revisionism, absurd boasts, and in some cases, provable lies, are core to his politics.[144]

After departing the White House, January 20, 2021, Trump gave a farewell address at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland prior to departing on Air Force One for his residence in Palm Beach, Florida.[145] The AP fact-checked his speech, and reported that it included false statements about his presidency and administration's accomplishments. These included statements that he passed the largest tax cuts in history; that the U.S. economy during his tenure was the greatest in U.S. history; that he achieved record job creation; that his administration rebuilt both the U.S. military and the American manufacturing industry; that he destroyed the ISIS caliphate; and a reiteration of his previously repeated falsehood that he, and not former President Barack Obama, had passed the Veterans Choice Act.[146] These falsehoods added to the 30,573 falsehoods that *The Washington Post*'s fact-checker had tallied by the end of Trump's presidency,[1] an average of 21 falsehoods a day.[147]

Scholarly analysis of Trump's tweets found "significant evidence" of an intent to deceive:

> Analyzing Trump's tweets with a regression function designed to predict true and false claims based on their language and composition, it finds significant evidence of intent underlying most of Trump's false claims, and makes the case for calling them lies when that outcome agrees with the results of traditional fact-checking procedures.... We argue, based on our findings here, that intent to deceive is a reasonable inference from most of Trump's false tweets, and that drawing that conclusion when the evidence warrants could help scholars and journalists alike better explain the strategic functions of political falsehoods.[15]

Credibility polling

According to a September 2018 CNN-SSRS poll of 1,003 respondents, only 32% percent found Trump honest and trustworthy, the worst read in CNN polling history. The number was 33% on election day, November 8, 2016.[148][149] In June 2020, a Gallup poll of 1,034 adults within the U.S. found that 36% found Trump honest and trustworthy. By comparison, 60% of respondents found President Obama honest and trustworthy in June 2012 during his re-election campaign.[150][151]

Commentary and analysis

As president, Trump frequently made false statements in public speeches and remarks.[152][127][153][154] Trump uttered "at least one false or misleading claim per day on 91 of his first 99 days" in office according to *The New York Times*,[152] and 1,318 total in his first 263 days in office according to the "Fact Checker" political analysis column of *The Washington Post*.[155] By the *Post*'s tally, it took Trump 601 days to reach 5,000 false or misleading statements and another 226 days to reach the 10,000 mark.[156] For the seven weeks leading up to the midterm elections, it rose to an average of 30 per day[157] from 4.9 during his first 100 days in office.[158] The *Post* found that Trump averaged 15 false statements per day during 2018.[8]

The *New York Times* editorial board frequently lambasted Trump's dishonesty. In September 2018, the board called him "a president with no clear relation to the truth".[159] The following month, the board published an opinion piece titled, "Donald Trump Is Lyin' Up a Storm".[160]

James Comey had frequent discussions with Trump, and in his first major interview after his firing he described Trump as a serial liar who tells "baffling, unnecessary" falsehoods:[161]

> Sometimes he's lying in ways that are obvious, sometimes he's saying things that we may not know are true or false and then there's a spectrum in between ... he is someone who is—for whom the truth is not a high value.[161]

The Washington Post commentator Greg Sargent pointed out eight instances where government officials either repeated falsehoods or came up with misleading information to support falsehoods asserted by Trump, including various false claims about terrorists crossing or attempting to cross the Mexican border, that a 10% middle class tax cut had been passed, and a doctored video justifying Jim Acosta's removal from the White House press room.[162]

James P. Pfiffner, writing for *The Evolving American Presidency* book series, wrote that compared to previous presidents, Trump tells "vastly" more "conventional lies" that politicians usually tell to avoid criticism or improve their image. However, Pfiffner emphasized that "the most significant" lies told by Trump are instead "egregious false statements that are demonstrably contrary to well-known facts," because by causing disagreements about what the facts are, then people cannot properly evaluate their government: "Political power rather than rational discourse then becomes the arbiter."[163]

Selman Özdan, writing in the journal *Postdigital Science and Education*, describes that "many" of Trump's statements in interviews or on Twitter "may now be classed as bullshit," with their utter disregard for the truth, and their focus on telling "a version of reality that suits Trump's aims". She added

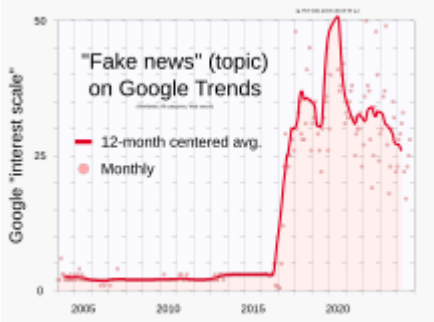
that these statements are "often" written in a way which criticizes or mocks others, while offering a misleading version of Trump's accomplishments to improve his image.[164]

Daniel Dale, writing for *The Washington Post*, described fact-checking Trump as being "like fact-checking one of those talking dolls programmed to say the same phrases for eternity, except if none of those phrases were true", noting that Trump had repeatedly and falsely claimed that he had passed the Veterans Choice Act and that U.S. Steel was building six, seven, eight or nine plants (the company had invested in two existing plants). Dale added: "Many of Trump's false claims are so transparently wrong that I can fact-check them with a Google search."[165]

Susan Glasser wrote that falsehoods are "part of his political identity" and quoted Glenn Kessler's description of them as "Trump's political 'secret sauce'". She described how "The White House assault on the truth is not an accident—it is intentional." When comparing Trump to Nixon, she quoted Barry Goldwater, who described Nixon as "the most dishonest individual I ever met in my life", but she did not stop there. She spoke to Morton Halperin "who oversaw the writing of the Pentagon Papers and then served on Nixon's National Security Council staff... Halperin insisted, strongly, that Nixon wasn't nearly as damaging to the institution of the Presidency as Trump has been. 'He's far worse than Nixon,' Halperin told me, 'certainly as a threat to the country'."[14]

Purpose and effect

Google Trends topic searches for "Gaslighting" began a substantial increase in 2016, at the time of the campaign for the U.S. presidential election.[166]



Google Trends topic searches for "Fake news" began a substantial increase in late 2016, about the time of the U.S. presidential election.[167]

A few days after Trump's January 20, 2017, inauguration, some experts expressed serious concerns about how Trump and his staff showed "arrogance" and "lack of respect...for the American people" by making "easily contradicted" false statements that rose to a "new level" above the "general stereotype that politicians lie". They considered the "degree of fabrication" as "simply breathtaking", egregious, and creating an "extraordinarily dangerous situation" for the country.[168]

They elaborated on why they thought Trump and his team were so deceptive: he was using classic gaslighting in a "systematic, sophisticated attempt" as a "political weapon"; he was undermining trust and creating doubt and hatred of the media and all it reports; owning his supporters and implanting "his own version of reality" in their minds; creating confusion so people are vulnerable, don't know what to do, and thus "gain more power over them"; inflating a "sense of his own popularity"; and making people "give up trying to discern the truth".[168]

> If Donald Trump can undercut America's trust in all media, he then starts to own them and can start to literally implant his own version of reality.[168]

Specific topics

Inaugural crowd

Trump's presidency began with falsehoods originating from Trump. On the day after his inauguration, he falsely accused the media of lying about the size of the crowd. He then exaggerated the size, and White House press secretary Sean Spicer backed up his claims.[169][170][171][172] When Spicer was accused of intentionally misstating the figures,[173][174][175] Kellyanne Conway, in an interview with NBC's Chuck Todd, defended Spicer by saying he merely presented alternative facts.[176] Todd responded by saying, "Alternative facts are not facts; they're falsehoods."[177]

In September 2018, a government photographer admitted he, at Trump's request,[178] edited pictures of the inauguration to make the crowd appear larger: "The photographer cropped out empty space 'where the crowd ended' for a new set of pictures requested by Trump on the first morning of his presidency, after he was angered by images showing his audience was smaller than Barack Obama's in 2009."[178][179]

2016 presidential election

Trump went on to claim his victory in 2016 was a landslide;[180][181][182] that three of the states he did not win in the 2016 election had "serious voter fraud";[183][184][185][186] and that he didn't win the popular vote because Clinton received 3–5 million illegal votes.[187][188] Trump made his Trump Tower wiretapping allegations in March 2017, which the Department of Justice twice refuted.[189][190] In January 2018, Trump claimed texts between FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page were tantamount to "treason," but *The Wall Street Journal* reviewed them and concluded they "show no evidence of a conspiracy against" Trump.[191][192]

Denial of Russian hacking and election interference

Trump frequently denied or sowed doubt that Russian intelligence hacked the DNC and interfered in the 2016 election. He made many different claims, such as that there was no hacking, other countries than Russia did it, or the DNC hacked itself and that Seth Rich was involved. He has said Russia did not try to get him elected and often called allegations of Russian meddling "a hoax". "Trump is fond of tossing out conspiracy theories, even if just to add a sliver of doubt. His supporters have embraced his conspiracy theories, especially when it comes to Mueller's investigation." The Russia investigation conclusively proved Russian intelligence was behind the hackings.[193][194]

Robert Mueller, who led a Special Counsel investigation, concluded Russian interference was "sweeping and systematic" and "violated U.S. criminal law", and he indicted 26 Russian citizens and 3 Russian organizations. The investigation led to indictments and convictions of Trump campaign officials and associated Americans. The Mueller report, made public in April 2019, examined contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian officials but concluded that, though the Trump campaign welcomed the Russian activities and expected to benefit from them, there was insufficient evidence to bring any conspiracy or coordination charges against Trump or associates.[195]

Denial of collusion with Russia

Trump repeatedly claimed he and his campaign did not collude with Russia, and Republicans and many otherwise reliable sources have repeated that false claim even though Mueller explained that he did not investigate "collusion", only "conspiracy" and "coordination". The claim that there was no collusion has been described as a myth.[196]

In a January 2019 interview, Trump's attorney, Rudy Giuliani undermined Trump's claim when he "claimed Wednesday night that he 'never said there was no collusion' between President Trump's campaign and Russia leading up to the 2016 presidential election."[197]

> Giuliani: [complained about] 'false reporting' on the Russia investigation.
> Cuomo: 'Mr. Mayor, false reporting is saying that nobody in the campaign had any contacts with Russia. False reporting is saying that there has been no suggestion of any kind of collusion between the campaign and any Russians.'
> Giuliani: 'You just misstated my position. I never said there was no collusion between the campaign, or between people in the campaign.'
> Cuomo: 'Yes, you have.'[197]

After his comments, Giuliani made statements that NPR described as an "apparent reversal" from his TV interview: He said "'there was no collusion by President Trump in any way, shape or form' and that he had 'no knowledge of any collusion by any of the thousands of people who worked on the campaign'."[198]

The investigation found there were at least 140 contacts between Trump or 18 of his associates with Russian nationals and WikiLeaks or their intermediaries, though the contacts were insufficient to show an illegal "conspiracy".[199]

Dismissal of FBI director

On May 9, 2017, Trump dismissed James Comey, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, saying he had accepted the recommendations of U.S. attorney general Jeff Sessions and deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein to dismiss Comey. In their respective letters, neither Trump, Sessions nor Rosenstein mentioned the issue of an FBI investigation into the many suspicious links between Trump associates and Russian officials and spies, with Rosenstein writing that Comey should be dismissed for his handling of the conclusion of the FBI investigation into the Hillary Clinton email controversy, a rationale seconded by Sessions.[200][201][202] On May 11, Trump said in an NBC News interview: "Regardless of recommendation, I was going to fire Comey ... in fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story".[203][204][205] On May 31, Trump tweeted, "I never fired James Comey because of Russia!"[191]

Personal lawyer

In 2017 and in the first half of 2018, Trump repeatedly praised his attorney Michael Cohen as "a great lawyer," "a loyal, wonderful person," "a good man" and someone Trump "always liked" and "respected". In the second half of 2018, with Cohen testifying to federal investigations, Trump attacked Cohen as a "rat," "a weak person, and not a very smart person" and described Cohen as "a PR person who did small legal work, very small legal work ... He represented me very little".[203][206][207]

In 2018, Trump told reporters on Air Force One that he did not know about a payment of $130,000 that Cohen made to porn actress Stormy Daniels or where Cohen had obtained the money from.[208] Glenn Kessler of *The Washington Post* described this statement as a lie,[209] as Trump had personally reimbursed Cohen.[208][209][210] On May 30, 2024, a New York City jury found Trump guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records to conceal these reimbursement payments.

In 2021, several lawyers who had previously worked with Trump, reportedly declined to assist him in asserting executive privilege over the subpoenas served by the House Select Committee on January 6. One of these was William Burck, who had represented 11 Trump associates regarding the Mueller investigation. When Trump was asked about the refusal of his former lawyers to involve themselves in his legal battle, he said: "I don't even know who they are... I am using lawyers who have been with us from the beginning."[211][212]

Spygate conspiracy theory

In May 2018, Trump developed and promoted the false[213][214][215] Spygate conspiracy theory[213][216] alleging the Obama administration planted a spy inside Trump's campaign to help Clinton win the 2016 election.[217][218]

Political commentators and high-ranking politicians from both main parties dismissed Trump's allegations as lacking evidence and maintained that the FBI's use of Halper as a covert informant was in no way improper. Trump's claims about when the counterintelligence investigation was initiated have been shown to be false.[219] A December 2019 Justice Department Inspector General report "found no evidence that the FBI attempted to place any [Confidential Human Sources] within the Trump campaign, recruit members of the Trump campaign as CHSs, or task CHSs to report on the Trump campaign."[220]

2018 California wildfires

During the 2018 California wildfires which ultimately caused $3.5 billion (~$4.18 billion in 2023) in damages and killed 103 people, Trump misrepresented a method that Finland uses to control wildfires. After speaking with President of Finland Sauli Niinistö, Trump reported in November 2018, that Niinistö had called Finland a "forest nation" and "they spend a lot of time on raking and cleaning and doing things, and they don't have any problem." Trump's comments sparked online memes about raking leaves. Niinistö clarified there is "a good surveillance system and network" for forest management in Finland and he did not recall having mentioned raking.[221]

Special counsel investigation

In March 2019, Trump asserted that the Mueller special counsel investigation was "illegal". Previously in June 2018, Trump argued that "the appointment of the Special Counsel is totally UNCONSTITUTIONAL!" However, in August 2018, Dabney Friedrich, a Trump-appointed judge on the DC District Court ruled the appointment was constitutional, as did a unanimous three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in February 2019.[222][223]

The *Mueller Report* asserted that Trump's family members, campaign staff, Republican backers, administration officials, and his associates lied or made false assertions, with the plurality of falsehoods from Trump himself, whether unintentional or not, to the public, Congress, or authorities, per a CNN analysis.[224]

Also in March 2019, following the release of Attorney General William Barr's summary of the findings of the completed special counsel investigation, Trump tweeted: "No Collusion, No Obstruction, Complete and Total EXONERATION". However, Barr had quoted special counsel Mueller as writing that "while this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him" on whether he had committed obstruction of justice. Barr declined to bring an obstruction-of-justice charge against the President. In testimony to Congress in May 2019, Barr said he "didn't exonerate" Trump on obstruction as that was not the role of the Justice Department.[225][226][227]

Trump, Republicans, and many otherwise reliable sources have repeatedly and falsely claimed that Mueller found "no collusion", even though Mueller explained that he did not investigate "collusion", only "conspiracy" and "coordination". The claim has been described as a myth.[196]

Economy

Through his first 28 months in office, Trump repeatedly and falsely characterized the economy during his presidency as the best in American history.[228]

As of March 2019, Trump's most repeated falsehoods, each repeated during his presidency more than a hundred times, were that a U.S. trade deficit would be a "loss" for the country, that his tax cuts were the largest in American history, that the economy was the strongest ever during his administration, and that the wall was being built. By August, he had made this last claim at least 190 times. He also made 100 false claims about NATO spending, whether on the part of the U.S. or other NATO members.[229]

Trump claimed during the campaign GDP could grow at "5 or even 6" percent under his policies. During 2018, the economy grew at 3%, the same rate as 2015 under Obama. Obama's advisers explained growth limits as "sluggish worker productivity and shrinking labor supply as baby boomers retire".[230]

Trump claimed in October 2017 he would eliminate the federal debt over eight years, even though it was $19 (~$23.00 in 2023) trillion at the time.[231] However, the annual deficit (debt addition) in 2018 was nearly $800 billion, about 60% higher than the CBO forecast of $500 billion when Trump took office. The CBO January 2019 forecast for the 2018–2027 debt addition was 40% higher, at $13 trillion, rather than $9.4 trillion when Trump was inaugurated.[232] Other forecasts place the debt addition over a decade at $16 trillion, bringing the total to around $35 trillion. Rather than a debt to GDP ratio in 2028 of 89% had Obama's policies continued, CBO estimated it at 107%, assuming Trump's tax cuts for individuals are extended past 2025.[233]

Trump sought to present his economic policies as successful in encouraging businesses to invest in new facilities and create jobs. In this effort, he took credit on several occasions for business investments that began before he became president.[234][235]

Trump repeatedly claimed that China or Chinese exporters were bearing the burden of his tariffs, not Americans, a claim PolitiFact rated as "false".[236] Studies indicate U.S. consumers and purchasers of imports are bearing the cost and that tariffs are essentially a regressive tax. For example, CBO reported in January 2020 that: "Tariffs are expected to reduce the level of [U.S.] real GDP by roughly 0.5 percent and raise consumer prices by 0.5 percent in 2020. As a result, tariffs are also projected to reduce average real household income by $1,277 (in 2019 dollars) in 2020."[237] While Trump has argued that tariffs would reduce the trade deficit, it expanded to a record dollar level in 2018.[238]

Trump repeatedly claimed that the U.S. had a $500 billion annual trade deficit with China before his presidency; the actual deficit never reached $400 billion prior to his presidency.[208]

The following table illustrates some of the key economic variables in the last three years of the Obama Administration (2014–2016) and the first three years of the Trump Administration (2017–2019). Trump often claimed the economy was doing better than it was, after he was elected.[230]

Variable	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
President[230]	Obama	Obama	Obama	Trump	Trump	Trump
Real GDP growth[239]	2.5%	3.1%	1.7%	2.3%	3.0%	2.2%
Job creation per month (000s)[240]	250	227	195	176	193	178
Unemployment rate (December)[241]	5.6%	5.0%	4.7%	4.1%	3.9%	3.5%
Inflation rate (CPI-All, Avg.)[242]	1.6%	0.1%	1.3%	2.1%	2.4%	1.8%
Real median household income $[243]	$56,969	$59,901	$61,779	$62,626	$63,179	$68,703
Real wage growth %[244]	0.4%	2.2%	1.3%	0.4%	0.6%	1.3%
Mortgage rate 30-yr fixed (Avg.)[245]	4.2%	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.5%	3.9%
Stock market annual % increase (SP 500)[246]	11.4%	0.7%	9.5%	19.4%	6.2%	28.9%
Budget deficit % GDP[247]	2.8%	2.4%	3.2%	3.5%	3.9%	4.6%
Number uninsured (millions)[248]	35.7	28.4	28.2	28.9	30.1	30.4
Trade deficit % GDP[249]	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%	3.0%	2.9%

Family separation policy

President Trump repeatedly and falsely said he inherited his administration's family separation policy from Obama, his predecessor. In November 2018, Trump said, "President Obama separated children from families, and all I did was take the same law, and then I softened the law." In April 2019, Trump said, "President Obama separated children. They had child separation; I was the one that changed it." In June 2019, Trump said, "President Obama had a separation policy. I didn't have it. He had it. I brought the families together. I'm the one that put them together... I inherited separation, and I changed the plan". Trump's assertion was false because the Obama administration had no policy systematically separating migrant families, while "zero tolerance" was not instituted until April 2018. PolitiFact quoted immigration experts saying that under the Obama administration families were detained and released together and separations rarely happened.[250][251][252]

E. Jean Carroll sexual assault accusation

In June 2019, writer E. Jean Carroll accused Trump of raping her in a department store in the mid-1990s. In an official statement, Trump said that (1) he had "never met [Carroll] in my life" although she provided a photograph of them socializing in 1987, and (2) the store shared security footage debunking the claim though in his 2022 deposition for the case, he denied having reached out to the company.[253][254] Trump was also criticized for saying in 2019 that Carroll was "not [his] type" but in his deposition confusing her in the aforementioned photograph for his ex-wife Marla Maples.[255]

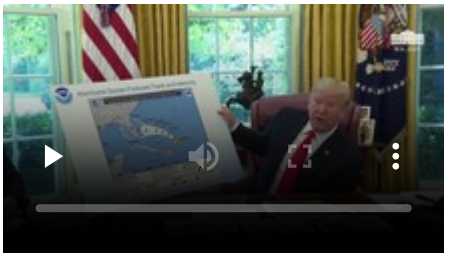
Article II and unlimited executive power

In July 2019, during a speech addressing youth at Turning Point USA Teen Student Action Summit in Washington, *The Washington Post* reported that, while criticizing the Mueller investigation, Trump falsely claimed Article Two of the U.S. Constitution ensures, "I have the right to do whatever I want as president." The *Post* clarified that "Article II grants the president 'executive power'. It does not indicate the president has total power".[256]

Hurricane Dorian

As Hurricane Dorian approached the Atlantic coast in August 2019, Trump presented himself as closely monitoring the situation, tweeting extensively as *The New York Times* reported he was "assuming the role of meteorologist in chief".[257] On September 1, Trump tweeted that Alabama, among other states, "will most likely be hit (much) harder than anticipated".[258] By that time, no forecaster was predicting Dorian would impact Alabama and the eight National Hurricane Center forecast updates over the preceding 24 hours showed Dorian steering well away from Alabama and moving up the coast.[259][260] The Birmingham, Alabama office of the National Weather Service (NWS) contradicted Trump 20 minutes later, tweeting that Alabama "will NOT see any impacts from Dorian."[261] After ABC News reporter Jonathan Karl reported the correction, Trump tweeted it was "Such a phony hurricane report by lightweight reporter @jonkarl".[262]

President Trump receives an update on Hurricane Dorian on August 29, 2019. This map was later altered to show the hurricane impacting Alabama.


President Trump displays the altered Hurricane Dorian map in a video published by the White House on September 4, 2019.

On September 4, in the Oval Office, Trump displayed a modified version of an August 29 diagram by the National Hurricane Center of the projected track of Dorian. The modification was done with a black marker and extended the cone of uncertainty of the hurricane's possible path into southern Alabama. Modifying government weather forecasts is illegal in the U.S.[263][264][265] Trump was known to use a Sharpie to write on documents, as well as speech notes and on the campaign trail.[266] A White House official told *The Washington Post* Trump had altered the diagram with a Sharpie marker.[267] Trump said he did not know how the map came to be modified and defended his claims, saying he had "a better map" with models that "in all cases [showed] Alabama was hit". Later on September 4, Trump tweeted a map by the South Florida Water Management District dated August 28 showing numerous projected paths of Dorian; Trump falsely asserted "almost all models" showed Dorian approaching Alabama.[268] A note on the map stated it was "superseded" by National Hurricane Center publications and that it was to be discarded if there were any discrepancies.[259][269]

On September 5, after Fox News correspondent John Roberts reported about the story, Trump summoned him to the Oval Office. Roberts later characterized Trump as "just looking for acknowledgment that he was not wrong for saying that at some point, Alabama was at risk—even if the situation had changed by the time he issued the tweet".[270] Trump's Homeland Security Advisor Peter Brown issued a statement

asserting Trump had been provided a graphic on September 1 showing tropical storm force winds touching the southeastern corner of Alabama; a White House source told CNN that Trump had personally instructed Brown to issue the statement.[270]

On September 6, at Trump's direction, White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney told Commerce secretary Wilbur Ross to order acting NOAA administrator Neil Jacobs to fix the contradiction by Birmingham NWS, and Ross threatened to fire top NOAA officials if he did not.[271][272] NOAA then tweeted a statement by an unnamed spokesman disavowing the Birmingham NWS tweet, asserting "the information provided by NOAA and the National Hurricane Center to President Trump and the wider public demonstrated that tropical-storm-force winds from Hurricane Dorian could impact Alabama," adding that the Birmingham tweet "spoke in absolute terms that were inconsistent with probabilities from the best forecast products available at the time".[273][274] The president of the NWS Employees Organization responded, "the hard-working employees of the NWS had nothing to do with the utterly disgusting and disingenuous tweet sent out by NOAA management tonight".[275] Former senior NOAA executives were sharply critical.[276] That evening, Trump tweeted a video of a CNN hurricane forecast from the Wednesday before his Sunday tweet in which the forecaster mentioned Alabama could be affected by Dorian—with the video altered to show "Alabama" being repeated several times; the video ended with a CNN logo careening off a road and bursting into flames.[277] Trump continued to insist he was correct through September 7,[278] asserting "The Fake News Media was fixated" and tweeting forecast maps from at least two days before his original Sunday tweet, as the media dubbed the episode "Sharpiegate".[279][280][281] Commentators expressed bafflement that Trump chose to insist he was correct about what might otherwise have passed as a minor gaffe.[288]

On September 9, NWS director Louis Uccellini said the Birmingham NWS had not tweeted in response to Trump's tweet, but in response to phone calls and social media contacts they had received in response to Trump's tweet. "Only later, when the retweets and politically based comments started coming to their office, did they learn the sources of this information," he said.[289]

Meeting with Iran

On September 16, 2019, Trump tweeted that "the fake news" was incorrectly reporting that he was willing to meet with Iran with no pre-conditions. Trump had said in July 2018 and June 2019 that he was willing to meet with Iran with no pre-conditions, and secretary of state Mike Pompeo and treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin confirmed this to be Trump's position during a White House press briefing five days before Trump's tweet.[290]

U.S military pullout from Kurdistan

After Trump ordered the pullout of U.S soldiers from Kurdistan in October 2019 ahead of an expected Turkish military assault, Trump said the Kurds "didn't help us in the Second World War", which was false as Kurdish soldiers fought for allied forces, notably Britain and the Soviet Union.[291][292]

Obamagate conspiracy theory

Trump and some of his supporters allege that Obama and his administration conspired to politically surveil Trump's presidential campaign and presidential transition through inappropriate investigations by the Department of Justice, the U.S. Intelligence Community, and the U.S. Foreign Intelligence

Surveillance Court. Trump nicknamed the series of events, which he called a major scandal, "Obamagate". Trump's critics called it an unfounded conspiracy theory.[293][294][295][296]

On May 10, 2020—one day after former president Barack Obama criticized the Trump administration's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic[297]—Trump posted a one-word tweet: "OBAMAGATE!"[298] On May 11, Philip Rucker of *The Washington Post* asked Trump what crime former president Barack Obama committed. Trump's reply was: "Obamagate. It's been going on for a long time ... from before I even got elected and it's a disgrace that it happened.... Some terrible things happened and it should never be allowed to happen in our country again." When Rucker again asked what the crime was, Trump said: "You know what the crime is. The crime is very obvious to everybody. All you have to do is read the newspapers, except yours."[299] On May 15, Trump tweeted that Obamagate was the "greatest political scandal in the history of the United States". This was the third time Trump claimed to be suffering from a scandal of such magnitude, after previously giving Spygate and the Russia investigation similar labels.[300] Also on May 15, Trump linked Obamagate to the "persecution" of Michael Flynn, and a missing 302 form.[301]

Trump called for Congress to summon Obama to testify about "the biggest political crime".[302] Senator Lindsey Graham, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said that he did not expect to summon Obama, but would summon other Obama administration officials.[303] Meanwhile, Attorney General William Barr stated that he did not "expect" Obama to be investigated of a crime.[302] Some of Trump's allies have suggested that the "crime" involved the FBI launching an investigation into incoming national security advisor Michael Flynn,[304] or possibly the "unmasking" by outgoing Obama officials to find out the name of a person who was reported in intelligence briefings to be conversing with the Russian ambassador.[305]

In a May 2020 op-ed at the news website RealClearPolitics, Charles Lipson, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Chicago analyzed the content of "Obamagate". He claimed that the concept refers to three intertwined scandals: (1) The Obama administration conducted mass surveillance through the NSA; (2) the Obama administration used surveillance against Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, and (3) the Obama administration did not transfer power seamlessly to the new Trump administration. Lipson further claimed that "these abuses didn't simply follow each other; their targets, goals, and principal players overlapped. Taken together, they represent some of the gravest violations of constitutional norms and legal protections in American history".[306]

The AP in May 2020 addressed Obamagate in a fact check, stating that there was "no evidence" of Trump's suggestion that "the disclosure of Flynn's name as part of legal U.S. surveillance of foreign targets was criminal and motivated by partisan politics." AP stated that there is not only "nothing illegal about unmasking," but also that the unmasking of Flynn was approved using the National Security Agency's "standard process." Unmasking is allowed if officials feel that it is needed to understand the collected intelligence. AP further pointed out that the Trump administration was conducting even more unmasking than the Obama administration in the final year of Obama's presidency.[307] In May 2020, attorney general Bill Barr appointed federal prosecutor John Bash to examine unmasking conducted by the Obama administration.[308] The inquiry concluded in October with no findings of substantive wrongdoing.[309] By October 2020, the complex "Obamagate" narrative served as an evolution and rebranding of the "Spygate" conspiracy.[310]

Joe Scarborough murder conspiracy theory

Trump repeatedly advocated a baseless conspiracy theory suggesting that television host Joe Scarborough was involved in the 2001 death of a staffer Lori Klausutis, who worked for Scarborough while the latter was a member of Congress.[311] Trump labeled the woman's death an unsolved "cold case" in one of multiple tweets and called on his followers to continue to "keep digging" and to "use forensic geniuses" to find out more about the death. Scarborough's wife and *Morning Joe* co-host Mika Brzezinski called the president a "cruel, sick, disgusting person" for his tweets and urged Twitter to remove Trump's tweets.[312] Scarborough called Trump's tweet "unspeakably cruel".[313]

Lori Klausutis was a constituent services coordinator in one of Scarborough's congressional offices in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.[311] Klausutis was found dead on the floor near her desk in that office on July 19, 2001.[314] An autopsy by Medical Examiner Dr. Michael Berkland[315] revealed a previously undiagnosed heart-valve irregularity, floppy mitral valve disease, that caused a cardiac arrhythmia that in turn halted her heart, stopped her breathing, and caused the 28-year-old to lose consciousness, fall, and hit her head on the edge of a desk.[314][316][317][318] Klausutis' cause of death was determined at the time of death to be due to natural causes, and local authorities have never attempted to re-investigate because there was no evidence of an alternative explanation for her death.[319] Scarborough was in Washington, D.C. at the time of her death in Florida.[320][321][322]

In May 2020, Klausutis's widower, Timothy Klausutis, called for the removal of Trump's tweets. He wrote a letter to Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter, saying: "I'm asking you to intervene in this instance because the President of the United States has taken something that does not belong to him—the memory of my dead wife—and perverted it for perceived political gain".[323] Twitter refused to take down Trump's false tweets, and the White House Press Secretary, Kayleigh McEnany, only stated that her heart was with the family. Twitter stated that statements by the President, even false ones, are newsworthy.[324]

Advances for black Americans

In 2020, Trump claimed multiple times that he or his administration had "done more for the black community than any president," in some cases compared to all presidents, and in other cases to all presidents "since Abraham Lincoln" (who abolished slavery in the U.S.). Prominent historians instead pointed to Lyndon B. Johnson as the president who did most for the black community since Lincoln, for his Civil Rights Act of 1964 and his Voting Rights Act of 1965. The historians also highlighted that the presidencies of Harry Truman, Ulysses S. Grant, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Barack Obama had done much for the black community. Trump's own achievements were dismissed as minor, while Trump was faulted for racially divisive rhetoric and attacks on voting rights.[325]

Republican Party approval rating tweets

After Trump took office in 2017, he routinely tweeted an approval rating between 94% and 98% in the Republican Party without citing a source. Trump tweeted these approval ratings almost weekly, with a percentage around 96%. For example, a tweet from June 16, 2020, by Trump says "96% Approval Rating in the Republican Party. Thank you!" Another tweet from August 23, 2019, says "94% Approval Rating within the Republican Party. Thank you!" Trump's approval rating in the Republican Party was found to be around

> **Donald J. Trump**
> @realDonaldTrump
>
> President Trump Approval Rating in the Republican Party at 96%. Thank You!
>
> July 10, 2020[326]

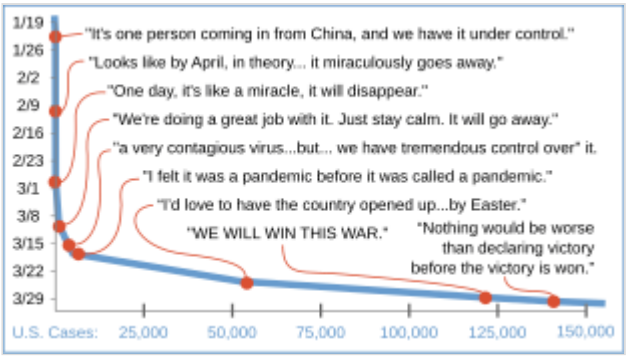
88% in a Fox News poll, 90% in a Gallup poll and 79% in an AP-NORC poll, with no evidence to support his tweets of approval ratings around 96%.[327][328][329] In 2020, the Pew Research Center reported an average approval rating of 87% amongst Republicans.[330]

Ilhan Omar

In 2019, Trump falsely accused Ilhan Omar of praising al-Qaeda, describing remarks Omar made in 2013 about how one of her college professors acted when he discussed al-Qaeda.[331] In 2021, Trump stated without evidence that Omar married her brother, committed "large-scale immigration and election fraud", and wished "death to Israel".[332]

COVID-19 pandemic

Trump denied responsibility for his administration's disbanding of the Pandemic Response Team headed by Rear Adm. R. Timothy Ziemer in 2018.[338][339]



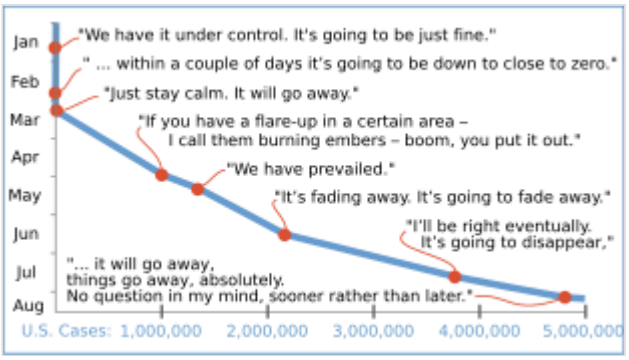
In the early stages of the pandemic, Trump's pronouncements "evolved from casual dismissal to reluctant acknowledgement to bellicose mobilization".[333] Though Trump "occasionally adopted health officials' more cautious tone", the optimism that dominated his early response "hadn't completely disappeared",[334] Trump having downplayed the threat of COVID-19 over 200 times by November 3, 2020.[335]

Trump made false, misleading, or inaccurate statements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as "We have it under control. It's going to be just fine" (January 22, 2020); "Looks like by April, you know, in theory, when it gets a little warmer, it miraculously goes away" (February 10), and "Anybody that wants a test can get a test" (March 6).[340] Trump repeatedly claimed the pandemic would "go away", even as daily new cases rose.[341]

On February 24, Trump tweeted: "The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA,"[342] and the next day Trump said, "I think that whole situation will start working out. We're very close to a vaccine," when none was known to be near production.[343][344][345][346] In late February, the Trump Administration stated that the outbreak containment was "close to airtight" and the virus is only as deadly as the seasonal flu.[347] The administration also stated that the outbreak was "contained" in early March even as the number of U.S. cases continued to increase, regardless of being publicly challenged.[348][349][350][351]

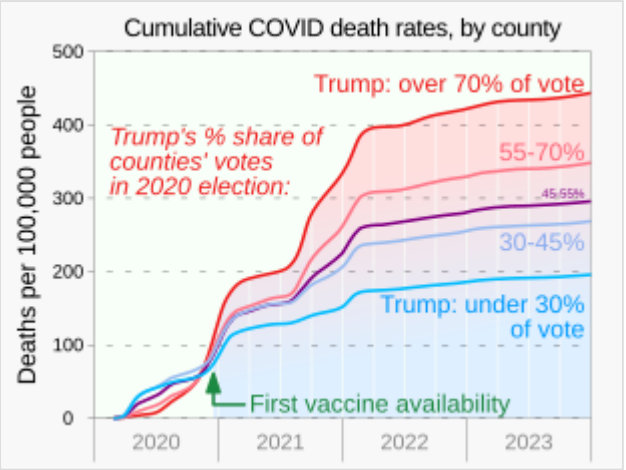
While on Fox News, Trump contradicted the World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that the global mortality rate for SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is 3.4%, saying. "Well, I think the 3.4 percent is really a false number—and this is just my hunch—but based on a lot of conversations with a lot of people that do this, because a lot of people will have this and it's very mild, they'll get better very rapidly. They don't even see a doctor. They don't even call a doctor. You never hear about those people," and said his "hunch" is that the real figure is "way under 1%". Trump speculated that "thousands or hundreds of thousands" of people might have recovered "by, you know, sitting around and even going to work—some of them go to work but they get better," contradicting medical advice to slow disease transmission.[352][353][354][355][356] On March 17, Trump stated, "I felt it was a pandemic long before it was called a pandemic."[357]

Anthony Fauci, director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, explained in a *Science* interview that before press conferences, the task force presents its consensus to Trump "and somebody writes a speech. Then (Trump) gets up and *ad libs*".[358] Fauci explained the task force told Trump to "be careful about this and don't say that," Fauci added "I can't jump in front of the microphone and push him down. OK, he said it. Let's try and get it corrected for the next time."[358]



As U.S. cases reached 4,800,000 and deaths reached 157,690 in the summer of 2020, Trump repeated his assertion that he believes coronavirus will "go away" despite his top public health expert warning that it could take most of 2021 or longer to get the pandemic under control.[336] Trump "made numerous versions of this assertion over...more than six months".[336]

Trump made 33 false claims about Covid in the first two weeks of March, per CNN analysis.[359] Trump made other incorrect Covid statements.[360][361] One false claim was that the U.S. had the highest rate per capita of COVID-19 testing, which it did not, compared to South Korea, Italy, and Germany.[362] Trump's misrepresentations attempted to paint the federal response in an excessively positive light, such as claiming hospitals "even in the really hot spots" were "really thrilled" with the level of medical supplies, when in fact hospitals were concerned about shortages of medications, personal protective equipment, and ventilators.[363]



After the December 2020 introduction of COVID vaccines, a partisan gap in death rates developed, indicating the effects of vaccine skepticism.[337] As of March 2024, more than 30 percent of Republicans had not received a Covid vaccine, compared with less than 10 percent of Democrats.[337]

An NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll conducted in April,[364] found 36% of Americans trusted Trump for information on COVID, and 52% distrusted him.[365] On April 14, Trump said he had "total" authority to reopen states, then said the next day that governors had to make decisions on when to reopen.[366]

On April 16, Trump said "Our experts say the curve has flattened, and the peak...is behind us." Trump added that "Nationwide, more than 850 counties, or nearly 30 percent of our country, have reported no new cases in the last seven days." The 30% of counties represented 6% of the population. Cases were added in counties where 94% of the population lived.[367]

On April 28, while discussing his own response to the pandemic, Trump falsely suggested that in late February, Fauci had said that the American COVID outbreak was "no problem" and was "going to blow over". Contrary to Trump's claims, Fauci had said in a February 29 interview that "now the risk is still low, but this could change...You've got to watch out because although the risk is low now...when you start

to see community spread, this could change and force you to become much more attentive to doing things that would protect you from spread ... this could be a major outbreak." Fauci had stressed "we want to underscore that this is an evolving situation".[368]

On May 19, Trump tweeted a statement claiming the WHO had ignored credible reports of the virus spreading in Wuhan in December 2019, including from *The Lancet*.[374][375] *The Lancet* rejected Trump's claims, saying "*The Lancet* published no report in December 2019, referring to a virus or outbreak in Wuhan or anywhere else in China. The first reports the journal published were on January 24, 2020".[374][375] *The Lancet* wrote that the allegations Trump made against the WHO were "serious and damaging to efforts to strengthen international cooperation to control this pandemic".[374][375] *The Lancet* said "It is essential that any review of the global response is based on a factually accurate account of what took place in December and January".[374][375]

On June 20, at a rally in Oklahoma, Trump suggested America should slow down testing. In response to the high number of tests, he said that "When you do testing to that extent, you're going to find more people, you're going to find more cases, so I said to my people, 'Slow the testing down, please.'" White House officials claimed that Trump was only joking. In an interview, Trump said that while he never gave an order to slow down testing, he claimed that if the U.S. slowed down the testing, they would look like they're doing better. "I wouldn't do that," he said, "but I will say this: We do so much more than other countries it makes us, in a way, look bad but actually we're doing the right thing." The percentage of positive cases in the U.S. was over two times higher than recommended by the WHO.[376][377][378]

On July 4, 2020, Trump falsely stated that "99 percent" of cases are "totally harmless".[370][379] Trump contradicted public health experts by saying that the U.S. will "likely have a therapeutic and/or vaccine solution long before the end of the year".[379] FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn declined to state whether Trump's "99 percent" statement was accurate or to say how many cases are harmless.[379] In March, the WHO estimated 15% of COVID cases become severe and 5% become critical.[380]

As the U.S. daily new case count increased from about 20,000 on June 9 to over 50,000 by July 7, Trump repeatedly insisted the increase was a function of increased COVID-19 testing.[381] Trump's claims were contradicted by the fact states having increased case counts, as well as those having decreased case

On "totally harmless" cases

Now we have tested over 40 million people. But by so doing, we show cases, 99 percent of which are totally harmless.

South Lawn "Salute to America" speech[369][370]
July 4, 2020

On COVID testing

Think of this: If we didn't do testing—instead of testing over 40 million people, if we did half the testing, we would have half the cases. If we did another—you cut that in half, we would have, yet again, half of that.

Rose Garden press conference[371]
July 14, 2020

On *per capita* death rates

Journalist: "I'm talking about death as a proportion of *population*. That's where the US is really bad. ..."
Trump: "You can't do that! You have to go by—look, here's the United States—you have to go by (death as a proportion of) the *cases*."

Interview with Jonathan Swan[372]
August 2020

On effectiveness of masks

counts, had increased testing, that the positive test rate increased in all ten states with the largest case increases, and that case rate increases consistently exceeded testing rate increases in states with the most new cases.[381]

> Just the other day (the CDC) came out with a statement that 85 percent of the people that wear masks catch it.
>
> Trump in the NBC Town Hall[373]
> October 15, 2020

On August 5, 2020, Trump asserted that children should go back to school and learn in an in-person setting. He said, "If you look at children, children are almost, I would almost say definitely, but almost immune from this disease. So few. Hard to believe. I don't know how you feel about it but they have much stronger immune systems than we do somehow for this. They don't have a problem." According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children account for about 7% of COVID cases. A study reported in *Science Magazine* showed that "children under age 14 are between one-third and one-half as likely as adults to contract the virus." Facebook took action against Trump's claim that children are "almost immune," removing a video of him claiming this posted on his account. Twitter took action against a similar tweet made by Trump's campaign, stating the account would be restricted from tweeting until the tweet was removed. The account removed the tweet that day.[382][383][384]

Trump noted New Zealand's success in dealing with COVID while referring on August 18, 2020, to a "big surge in New Zealand"[385]—on a day when New Zealand had 13 new reported cases, a cumulative total of 1,643 COVID cases and a cumulative total of 22 COVID-related deaths, with no new COVID-related deaths reported since May 2020. Commentators in New Zealand called Trump's terminology into question—Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters noted: "The American people can work out that what we have for a whole day, they have every 22 seconds of the day [...]."[386] (New Zealand has a population about 1.5% of the U.S.[387])

In 18 interviews from December 5, 2019, to July 21, 2020, between Trump and Bob Woodward, Trump admitted he deceived the public about the severity of the pandemic. On February 7, he told Woodward, "This is deadly stuff. You just breathe the air and that's how it's passed. And so that's a very tricky one. That's a very delicate one. It's also more deadly than even your strenuous flu." On March 19, he said, "I wanted to always play it down. I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic." Audio recordings of these interviews were released on September 9, 2020.[388][389][390][391]

Legal analyst Glenn Kirschner argued that Trump should be charged with manslaughter for deaths resulting from him intentionally lying to the public about the danger posed by COVID.[392][393]

The military and veterans

In 2014, a bipartisan initiative for veterans' healthcare, led by Senators Bernie Sanders and John McCain, was signed into law by President Barack Obama. The Veterans Choice program enables eligible veterans to receive government funding for healthcare provided outside the VA system. In 2018, Trump signed the VA MISSION Act to expand the eligibility criteria. Over the next two years, Trump falsely claimed over 150 times that he had created the Veterans Choice program itself. When reporter Paula Reid questioned him about this in August 2020, noting that he repeatedly made a "false statement" in taking credit for the program, Trump abruptly walked out of the news conference.[394]

In a speech given at Al Asad Airbase to US military personnel on Christmas 2018,[395] Trump boasted that the military had not gotten a raise in ten years, and that he would be giving them a raise of over 10 percent. In fact, American military personnel received a pay hike of at least one percent for the past 30 years,[396] got a 2.4 percent pay increase in 2018, and would receive a 2.6 percent pay increase for 2019.[397]

On January 3, 2020, Trump stated in a speech "Last night, at my direction, the United States military successfully executed a flawless precision strike that killed the number-one terrorist anywhere in the world, Qasem Soleimani."[398] Trump's act of changing the reasons for killing Soleimani were questioned and analyzed by fact-checkers, and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper contradicted Trump's claim that the Iranians were planning to attack four embassies.[399]

Voting by mail

President Trump repeatedly made false, misleading or baseless claims in his criticism of voting by mail in the U.S. This included claims that other countries would print "millions of mail-in ballots", claims that "80 million unsolicited ballots" were being sent to Americans, and claims that Nevada's presidential election process was "100% rigged".[401] Another claim was alleging massive voter fraud. In September 2020, FBI Director Christopher A. Wray, who was appointed by Trump, testified under oath that the FBI had "not seen, historically, any kind of coordinated national voter fraud effort in a major election, whether it's by mail or otherwise".[402]

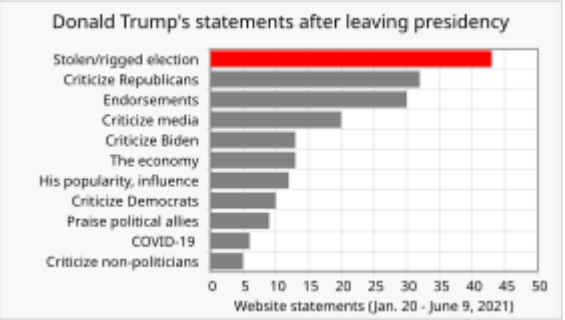
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone living in the state, no matter who they are or how they got there, will get one. That will be followed up with professionals telling all of these people, many of whom have never even thought of voting before, how, and for whom, to vote. This will be a Rigged Election. No way!

May 26, 2020[400]

2020 presidential election

During his 2020 presidential campaign, Trump claimed his opponent Joe Biden would "destroy" Americans' "protections for pre-existing conditions",[405] while Trump's administration has said the entire Affordable Care Act, which created such protections, should be struck down.[406]



CNN fact checker Daniel Dale reported that through June 9, 2021, Trump had issued 132 written statements since leaving office, of which "a third have included lies about the election"—more than any other subject.[403]

On November 4, Trump delivered a speech inside the White House falsely claiming he had already won the 2020 presidential election. He made numerous false and misleading statements to support his belief that vote counting should stop and that he should be confirmed as the winner.[407] After Joe Biden was declared the winner of the election, Trump repeatedly and falsely claimed Biden had won through ballot fraud against him.[408] He repeated and tweeted false and misleading claims about vote counting,

Missing ballots

Dominion Voting Systems, poll watchers, alleged voting irregularities, and more.[409] During the two-month transition period to the Biden administration, according to a *Huffington Post* count of his false claims, Trump said the election was rigged (he made this claim 68 times), stolen (35 times), determined by fraudulent or miscounted votes (250 times), and affected by malfunctioning voting machines (45 times).[410]

> Did you see they found 50,000 ballots in, like, a river?
>
> —Trump, in Michigan, October 2020[404]

Following the election, Trump continued to claim he had won it[411] and that it was a rigged election.[412][413] Anthony Scaramucci, a longtime Trump associate who was briefly White House communications director before breaking with Trump, said in July 2022 that the former president knew the election had not been stolen. Scaramucci said that during the 2016 campaign Trump had asked him and others why people didn't realize he was playacting and 'full of it' at least half the time, "so he knows that this is all a lie."[414] Years later, Trump persists in the false claim about the 2020 election. For example, on August 29, 2022, he demanded on Truth Social that the nation "declare the rightful winner or ... have a new Election, immediately!"[415]

In October 2022, a U.S. District Court Judge ruled that Trump and allies participated in a "knowing misrepresentation of voter fraud numbers in Georgia when seeking to overturn the election results in federal court". Specifically, the judge wrote that "President Trump knew that the specific numbers of voter fraud were wrong but continued to tout those numbers, both in court and to the public". The judge also found that related emails "are sufficiently related to and in furtherance of a conspiracy to defraud the United States" that the crime-fraud exemption voids Trump's lawyer's claim of attorney–client privilege.[416][417]

On April 25, 2023, CNN reported that Trump had told a new lie about the 2020 election: "Trump pointedly noted that Biden got more votes than Trump in fewer than a fifth of US counties in 2020. Trump then said, 'Nothing like this has ever happened before. Usually, it's very equal, or—but the winner always had the most counties.'" The statement was described as "complete bunk". Both "Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 and Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996, carried a minority of counties in each of their victories." William H. Frey, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, explained the facts:

> There is nothing suspicious about winning the presidency with a smaller number of counties. Counties vary widely in size, with large urban and suburban counties—areas where Biden did best—housing far larger populations than most of the outer suburb, small town and rural counties that Trump won.[418]

On July 18, 2023, when responding to Sean Hannity at a town hall meeting in Iowa, Trump told a new lie: "I also have to say something else, 'cause the one thing a lot of people, including you, don't talk about: they also create phony ballots, and that's a real problem. That's my opinion. They create a lot of phony ballots." The claim was described as "pure fiction".[419]

January 6 attack

On the attack of the Capitol

During the January 6, 2021, attack, minutes after Mike Pence had been rushed off the Senate floor, Trump tweeted that "Mike Pence didn't have the courage" to refuse to certify the election results,

implying Pence had the Constitutional power to do so—a claim dismissed by the federal judges in the final two of 62 election-related lawsuits.[422]

In a January 7, 2021, White House video, Trump claimed, falsely, that he had "immediately deployed the National Guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders".[423]

Among outtakes for the January 7 video that were shown on July 21, 2022, by the House Select Committee, Trump remarked, "I don't want to say the election's over. I just want to say Congress has certified the results without saying the election's over, OK?"[424]

In late March 2021, Trump said the rioters "were ushered in by the police"[425][423] and "They showed up just to show support",[423] which is false in view of the 140 assaults on police officers in hours-long battles involving police engaging in hand-to-hand combat to try to keep rioters out of the building.[425]

At a July 7, 2021, news conference, Trump claimed "the person that shot Ashli Babbitt right through the head, just boom. There was no reason for that"; in fact, Babbitt was shot in the shoulder as she tried to enter an area of the Capitol used to evacuate lawmakers[423] and was within sight of lawmakers being evacuated.[426]

In a July 11, 2021, interview on Fox News, Trump called the events of January 6 a "lovefest" and said that it was "not right" that the rioters were "currently incarcerated"—conflicting with his January 7 statement telling rioters, "You will pay."[423]

> It was zero threat. Right from the start, it was zero threat. ... Some of them went in, and they're hugging and kissing the police and the guards, you know? They had great relationships. A lot of the people were waved in, and then they walked in, and they walked out.
>
> Donald Trump on March 25, 2021
> Phone interview with Fox News[420]

> **"... unbelievable patriots ...**
>
> You see the spirit from the hostages, and that's what they are—hostages.
>
> —Trump, March 16, 2024
> Campaign rally, Dayton, Ohio[421]

In an interview that aired on December 1, 2021, Trump said "hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people" had gathered to hear him speak on the day of the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol, saying "I think it was the largest crowd I've ever spoken before";[427] the Associated Press reported it as "several thousand."[428] Investigators estimated that "more than 2,000 people" entered the Capitol.[429]

On December 10, 2021, Trump told Fox News that the attack was "a protest" and that "the insurrection took place on November 3" (election day),[425][430] while in fact about 140 police officers were assaulted and the peaceful transfer of power was violently interrupted in an attack that involved thousands of alleged crimes, and the election was neither rigged nor fraudulent.[425] Trump also said to Fox News of his January 6 speech that "if you look at my words and what I said in the speech, they were extremely calming, actually", while in fact his speech proclaimed that "we fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."[430]

On December 21, 2021, Trump made a statement calling the attack a "completely unarmed protest".[425] Former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson subsequently testified before the House January 6 committee that the Secret Service had warned Trump on January 6 that protestors were carrying

weapons,[431] but that Trump demanded that the magnetometers—used to detect metallic weapons—be disabled, so that more supporters would fill the rally space.[432] When warned, Trump is said to have angrily responded:

> I don't fucking care that they have weapons, they're not here to hurt me. They're not here to hurt me. Take the fucking mags away. Let my people in. They can march to the Capitol from here, let the people in and take the mags away.[431]

Some protestors were armed with guns, stun guns, knives, batons, baseball bats, axes, and chemical sprays. In January 2022, the Justice Department made an official statement that over 75 people had been charged with entering a restricted area with "a dangerous or deadly weapon".[425]

In a February 5, 2022, rally, Trump said that if he runs again in 2024, "we will treat those people from January 6 fairly... And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons. Because they are being treated so unfairly"[433]—the claim of unfairness being unsupported by evidence.[434] Trump's claim echoed his September 16, 2021, written statement that "Our hearts and minds are with the people being persecuted so unfairly relating to the January 6th protest concerning the Rigged Presidential Election".[435]

Inter-presidency

2021 California gubernatorial recall election

Before the 2021 California gubernatorial recall election, Trump claimed without evidence that the election was "probably rigged" and said, "Does anybody really believe the California recall election isn't rigged?"[436][437] After polls closed, he said there was "rigged voting".[438]

COVID-19 healthcare discrimination against white people

In reference to a New York policy that allows race to be a consideration when dispensing oral antiviral treatments, Trump lied at a rally that white people don't get the vaccine and "have to go to the back of the line" for COVID-19 care.[439][440]

Spygate conspiracy theory

In a new iteration of the Spygate conspiracy theory,[441] in February 2022, Trump falsely[442] claimed Hillary Clinton spied on him during the Russia investigation.[443][444]

Drop boxes in the 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin

Following a Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling declaring ballot drop boxes illegal, Trump claimed this ruling retroactively applies to the 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin.[445] He also suggested he was the legitimate winner of that election.[446]

Federal prosecution (government documents case)

Following the FBI search of Mar-a-Lago in August 2022, Trump made false, misleading, unsubstantiated, and contradictory claims about the investigation into his handling of classified material. Among these, he suggested, without evidence, that President Biden played a role in the search, the FBI planted evidence, the search was unnecessary, and the classified documents in his possession were already declassified. He stated that as a US president, he was not required to follow the prescribed legal process, but could simply declassify them just "by thinking about it",[448][449] and "because you're sending it to Mar-a-Lago or wherever you're sending it. There doesn't have to be a process. There can be a process, but there doesn't have to be."[450]

> **Declassification of documents**
>
> There doesn't have to be a process, as I understand it. You're the president of the United States, you can declassify just by saying it's declassified, even by thinking about it. ... In other words, when I left the White House, they were declassified."
>
> Donald Trump on September 21, 2022
> Interview with Fox News[447]

On June 8, 2023, a grand jury indicted Trump. The 37th count was for "False statements and representations", specifically alleging that Trump hid documents from his own attorney, Evan Corcoran. The government had subpoenaed Trump for any classified documents he might have, so Corcoran searched the boxes for documents with classified markings. Because Trump deliberately misled him, Corcoran drafted a "sworn certification" that all subpoenaed documents had been returned, and another attorney, Christina Bobb, provided it to "the grand jury and the FBI".[22] On June 27, 2023, responding to the revelation that in 2021 he showed off a classified document and told the writers in the room to "look" at it, Trump described his own audiotaped words as "bravado, if you want to know the truth... I was talking and just holding up papers... but I had no documents."[451]

Federal prosecution (2020 election case)

The August 1, 2023 indictment listed 21 election-related lies Trump told.[23]

Claim of intervening in 2018 Florida vote count

On November 10, 2022, Trump alleged that Democrats had perpetrated "ballot theft" four years earlier in the Florida gubernatorial election. He claimed that, as president, he had intervened to support Republican candidate Ron DeSantis over his Democratic rival Andrew Gillum. "I sent in the FBI and the U.S. Attorneys," Trump claimed, when it seemed that DeSantis had been "running out of the votes necessary to win." Trump said he had thereby "fixed" the DeSantis campaign. Gillum filed in court to demand further information from Trump, as it sounded like an admission of wrongdoing; meanwhile, Florida's Broward County elections office denied that any such thing had happened during the 2018 election.[452] The FBI said in March 2023 that it had no records to support Trump's claim.[453]

2022 announcement speech

On November 15, 2022, almost two years in advance of the 2024 election, Trump announced his candidacy for a second term as president.[454][455][456] His announcement speech at Mar-a-Lago was "full of exaggerated and false talking points"[454] and at least "20 false and misleading claims",[455] uttering the first inaccurate claim "about two minutes in and a few minutes later, tick(ing) off at least four

hyperbolic claims about his own accomplishments".[456] *The New York Times* Fact Check stated that "Mr. Trump repeated many familiar exaggerations about his own achievements, reiterated misleading attacks on political opponents and made dire assessments that were at odds with reality."[456]

Trump's first inaccurate claim, about two minutes in, was that his administration "built the greatest economy in the history of the world", a claim that was inaccurate even for recent American history.[456] Trump wrongly claimed Americans surrendered $85 billion worth of military equipment to the Taliban in the Afghanistan withdrawal; the Defense Department estimate was $7.1 billion, some which was rendered inoperable before the withdrawal.[455] Trump claimed that his administration "filled up" the Strategic Petroleum Reserve but that under Biden it has been "virtually drained"; in fact, the reserve was not "virtually drained" under Biden, and it actually contained less when Trump left office than when he took office.[455] He falsely claimed that climate scientists "say the ocean will rise 1/8 of an inch over the next 200 to 300 years"; NOAA estimated average sea level rise along the U.S. coastline will be 10–12 inches in the next 30 years.[455]

Speaking of border crossings by undocumented aliens, he said "I believe it's 10 million people coming in, not three or four million people", a claim for which there is no empirical basis.[455] Likewise, his claim that the U.S.-Mexico border had been "erased" since Biden was sworn in, was also baseless.[454] Trump falsely heralded completion of his border wall; in fact, the vast majority of the "new" barriers reinforced or replaced existing structures, and only about 47 miles were new primary barriers along the 1,900-mile border.[456]

Trump said "I've gone decades, decades without a war, the first president to do it for that long a period"; however, he presided over U.S. involvement in wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and was commander-in-chief for dozens of U.S. airstrikes.[455] He claimed that when he began his term the U.S. had jet fighters that were 48 years old (and) bombers that were 60 years old—but not anymore"; in fact, the military continues to use B-52 bombers that are being outfitted with new Rolls-Royce engines to prolong their life even further.[455] Trump was wrong in claiming that the U.S. takes longer than "any" country to count votes, belied by longer times in Indonesia (more than a month in 2019), Afghanistan (five months after a September 2019 vote), and Bosnia (weeks in fall 2022).[456]

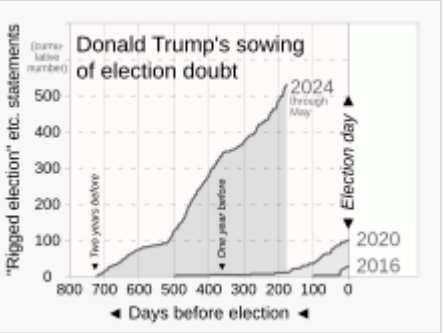
2023 CNN town hall

During the May 10, 2023 CNN Republican Town Hall, Trump repeated his false claims about the 2020 presidential election, the January 6 Capitol attack and his handling of classified documents. He also falsely claimed he had never met E. Jean Carroll and that the jury in her lawsuit against him had ruled that "he didn't rape her". Trump also falsely claimed that Brazil had seen a significant decline in gun-related violence after loosening its gun laws;[457] criminologists consulted by *The Washington Post* cited an aging population, investment in policing and recessions in drug cartel conflicts as more likely explanations for the decline.[458][457] He also promoted false claims about aid given to Ukraine for Russia's invasion, abortion and the economy during his presidency.[457]

2024 presidential campaign

During his 2024 presidential campaign, Trump has made numerous false and misleading statements.[460][461][462] The large amount of lies and false statements have been attributed to Trump's rhetorical style described as using the big lie and firehose of falsehood propaganda technique.[463][464]

During a 64 minute news conference on August 8, 2024, NPR counted Trump making over 162 "misstatements, exaggerations and outright lies" averaging more than two per minute. They described the amount of Trump's lies as "stunning" and "beyond the bounds of what most politicians would do".[465] CNN has called Trump's claims a "bombardment of dishonesty" and a "campaign of relentless lying".[466][467] *The Washington Post* has described Trump's speeches as a "bacchanalia of lies and mistruths".[468]



To sow election doubt, Trump escalated use of "rigged election" and "election interference" statements in advance of the 2024 election compared to the previous two elections—the statements described as part of a "heads I win; tails you cheated" rhetorical strategy.[459]

False and misleading statements by topic

2024 presidential election

Trump has made a variety of false claims aimed at sowing doubt in the election's integrity and setting up an election challenge should he lose the 2024 presidential election. He has repeatedly said that he can only lose the election through cheating, that it was "unconstitutional" for the Democratic party to make Kamala Harris the nominee, that all of the legal cases against him constitute election interference organized by Biden and Harris, and that extensive voter fraud is occurring, including through non-citizen voting, mail-in ballots, and early voting.[469]

Immigration and crime

In March and April 2023, on several occasions, Trump claimed that all the psychiatric patients in an unnamed "South American country" had been sent to the United States; he said he had "read a story" in which an unnamed "psychologist or psychiatrist" in that country said all his patients had disappeared. When CNN asked the Trump campaign to substantiate this, a spokesperson responded by providing unrelated information.[470] Trump has repeated this assertion throughout his campaign, falsely stating that foreign leaders are deliberately emptying insane asylums to send "prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients, terrorists" across America's southern border as migrants.[471]

Trump has made false claims of a "migrant crime wave" that are not supported by national data.[472] He claimed that "13,000 convicted murderers" had entered the U.S. during the Biden-Harris administration and "freely and openly roam" the country, when that number is for immigrants who'd committed a variety of crimes and entered the country during several administrations, many of whom are jailed.[473] Trump has falsely claimed that crime in several South American countries has decreased because their leaders are sending criminals into the United States.[474] Trump has painted America as violent and crime-ridden on the campaign trail. Trump has falsely stated that FBI statistics showing that homicides have dropped by 6% in 2022 and 13% in 2023 are "a lie".[475] Trump has repeatedly claimed that crime in America is only going up. In reality, crime is going down.[476] Trump falsely alleged that immigrants commit crimes because they have "bad genes," invoking what science writer Daniel Vergano describes as "the deeply dishonest scientism" of eugenics.[477]

Trump has falsely claimed America "had the most secure border" when he was President. In reality, illegal immigration was higher than it was during both of Obama's terms.[474] Trump has falsely claimed that illegal immigration has only increased under the Biden administration. In reality, by June 2024,

illegal immigration reached a three-year low[478] and decreased to levels not seen since September 2020 when Trump was in office.[479]

Trump has falsely claimed that 107% of jobs are taken by illegal immigrants. In reality, native-born Americans have gained more jobs than illegal immigrants during Biden's administration.[474] Research has repeatedly found that illegal immigrants do not depress wages or take jobs from Americans.[480][481][482][483]

Trump has falsely claimed that immigrants take social security benefits and are decreasing the life of the program. In reality, immigrants cannot take social security benefits but pay taxes, thus increasing the life of the program.[474]

The Bulwark uploaded a satirical video showing and debunking clips of Trump blaming migrants for "all problems," including "hurricane damage, bribery prosecutions, veteran homelessness, missing pets, and, the decline of little league baseball."[484]

Global warming and climate change

Trump has "routinely" dismissed climate change.[488][489] In 2012, Trump tweeted[490] that "global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive".[491] In December 2013, he tweeted that "I'm in Los Angeles and it's freezing. Global warming is a total, and very expensive, hoax!"—conflating global *climate* and local *weather*.[488] In January 2016 Trump told Fox News that he had been joking in the China tweet, but in a September 2016 presidential election debate he altogether denied having said the content of the tweet.[491]

> **...not our problem**
>
> When people talk about global warming, I say the ocean is going to go down 100th of an inch within the next 400 years. That's not our problem.
>
> — Presidential candidate Donald Trump, September 2024[485]

In 2018, Trump told *60 Minutes* that he does *not* believe that climate change is a hoax, but that "it'll change back again".[492] Similarly, during the 2020 California wildfires, Trump assured that "It'll start getting cooler, you just watch. [...] I don't think science knows, actually"—without justifying how he knew that things would get cooler but that scientists did not know things would get warmer.[493] While campaigning in September 2024, Trump said, "when people talk about global warming, I say the ocean is going to go down 100th of an inch within the next 400 years. That's not our problem";[485] in fact the IPCC forecast in 2019 that, even with significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions, the average sea level will rise 0.3 metres (0.98 ft) to 0.6 metres (2.0 ft) by 2100.[494]

Trump's opposition to wind power involves repeated claims that "windmills" "kill the birds",[486] but cats in the U.S. actually kill on the order of 10,000 times as many birds as wind turbines.[487]

Foreign policy

In rallies and interviews, Trump has repeatedly asserted that multiple events since the 2020 election would not have happened if he had won the election, those being the 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Experts have stated that such events likely would still have

happened even if Trump won the 2020 election. Jonathan Schanzer of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and Natan Sachs, the director of the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution have stated that there was no Trump-era policy that would have stopped the Hamas attack on Israel.[495] Scholars have also estimated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine would likely still have occurred and that Trump's statements towards NATO and Russia would likely have made an initial unified response to the Russian invasion "implausable" and may have resulted in an early Russian victory.[496]

During his campaign speeches, Trump erroneously asserted that the Biden administration was in the process of converting U.S. Army tanks into electrically powered vehicles.[497][498][499]

Healthcare

Trump has falsely claimed that he was responsible for lowering insulin costs to $35 for those on Medicare, and has falsely claimed that Biden is taking credit for his accomplishment. Trump has falsely claimed that he was responsible for the VA Choice law passed by Obama.[500]

Abortion

Trump has falsely claimed that Democratic states are passing laws to allow executing babies after birth.[501]

Roe v. Wade

At various times in 2024, Trump has claimed that everyone wanted Roe v. Wade to be overturned, including all legal scholars and people throughout the political spectrum.[502][503][504][505][506][507] Legal scholar Kimberly Mutcherson called the assertion "mind-numbingly false" and other legal scholars concur.[502][505][508] Similarly, many polls have shown that the majority of Americans did not want Roe overturned.[502][504][506][508]

LGBTQ claims

Trump has falsely claimed that schools are secretly sending children to have sex-change surgeries.[509]

Indictments

On July 18, 2023, Trump said in an Iowa speech that, before he was indicted on 88 felony charges, "I didn't know practically what a subpoena was and grand juries and all of this—now I'm like becoming an expert."[510] (He and his businesses had been involved in over 4,000 legal cases even before he was elected president seven years earlier.)[511] He also suggested he was facing jail time for having "sa[id] something about an election",[510] whereas the charges had to do with attempts to overturn it.

In August 2023, 27 of Trump's falsehoods about the 2020 election were listed in his Georgia indictment.[24]

Music Modernization Act

On February 11, 2024, Trump claimed on Truth Social that he "signed and was responsible" for the 2018 Music Modernization Act.[512] Dina LaPolt, an entertainment attorney who helped advance the law, told *Variety* "Trump did nothing on [the] legislation except sign it, and doesn't even know what the Music

Modernization Act does."[513]

Real vs. AI-generated images

On August 7, Vice President Kamala Harris arrived at Detroit Metropolitan Airport for a rally,[514] where she was received by a large crowd.[515] On August 11, Trump posted claims on social media that the crowd was not real, but AI-generated: "Trump (...) made the fabricated claim that Harris had been "turned in" by an airport maintenance worker who "noticed the fake crowd picture." He then said Harris should be "disqualified" from the 2024 election "because the creation of a fake image is ELECTION INTERFERENCE. Anyone who does that will cheat at ANYTHING!""[516]

These claims generated responses from fact-checkers,[517] news outlets,[518] and technology-related articles debunking him,[519][520] eliciting opinions and discussions about Trump's mental state.[521] When later asked about these claims, while Trump did not concede that the crowd in Michigan was real, he did not say again that the images were AI-generated: "Well, I can't say what was there, who was there. I can only tell you about ours. We have the biggest crowds ever in the history of politics (...)"[522]

Shortly thereafter, Trump himself would post several AI-generated images and videos on social media, which showed him dancing with Elon Musk,[523] falsely suggested that he had been endorsed by singer-songwriter Taylor Swift and her fans,[524] and depicted Kamala Harris speaking at a communist rally; many of these images were posted ahead of the first day of the 2024 Democratic National Convention.[525] When later asked whether he was worried that Taylor Swift would sue him, Trump stated: "I don't know anything about them, other than somebody else generated them."[526][527] Swift would later endorse Harris in the general election.[528]

Hurricane Helene

CNN and *PBS NewsHour* reported in the aftermath of the September 2024 hurricane that Trump had engaged in several days of spreading lies, distortions, disinformation and conspiracy theories about the federal response, which public officials said created confusion and hindered recovery efforts. Among the false claims were that Biden wouldn't take calls from Georgia's governor; that Harris had stolen Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to house undocumented migrants; that the Biden administration was providing only $750 to people whose homes had been destroyed by the hurricane; and that no attempts had been made to rescue people.[529][530][531]

Events

Biden vs. Trump presidential debate

On June 27, 2024, Biden and Trump debated in Atlanta. Fact-checking found that both debaters had made false or misleading statements, with most of them adjudicated to Trump. [532]

Speech at the Republican Convention

On July 18, 2024, the fourth day of the Republican Convention (Milwaukee), Trump addressed the audience at accepting the nomination. Fact-checking found he made several false statements.[533][534][535]

CPAC Speech

In what CNN described as a "lie-filled CPAC speech" in February 2024, Trump repeated false claims about the 2020 election and the border wall.[536]

NABJ interview

On July 31, 2024, Trump was interviewed at the National Association of Black Journalists annual convention, in Chicago. [537] According to fact-checkers, he made several false statements.[538][539][540]

Statements that caused special controversy were one about immigrants: "Coming from the border are millions and millions of people that happen to be taking Black jobs," and one about Kamala Harris: "I've known her a long time indirectly, not directly very much. And she was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago, when she happened to turn Black, and now she wants to be known as Black. So, I don't know, is she Indian or is she Black?".[541][542][543] Harris has always identified as both Indian-American and Black, attended Howard University (an historically Black university), and was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, a historically Black sorority.[544]

Mar-a-Lago news conference

On August 8, 2024, Trump gave a news conference at his Mar-a-Lago residence,[545] that NPR fact-checked and reported to contain "at least 162 misstatements, exaggerations and outright lies in 64 minutes."[546] Other fact-checkers also discussed the falsehoods.[547][548]

Two claims that drawn attention were that his January 6 crowd had been bigger than Martin Luther King Jr.'s attendance to his "great speech,"[549][550][551] and, the story about having been in a helicopter flight with former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, where Mr. Brown told him "terrible things" about Kamala Harris, and which ended in an emergency landing. It was discussed whether Trump had confused Willie Brown with former California Governor Jerry Brown,[552][553][554] but Politico established that the Trump's helicopter flight that ended in an emergency landing happened in 1990, having as passengers former city councilmember and state senator from Los Angeles Nate Holden, Barbara Res, Robert Trump, and attorney Harvey Freedman. There was no mention of Harris in that occasion.[555][556][557]

Elon Musk interview

On August 12, Elon Musk interviewed Donald Trump via X Spaces. The conversation start was delayed by technical issues; it was listened to live by an audience calculated in more than a million people.[558][559][560] Trump's campaign claimed that a billion people had listened to the conversation.[561]

Fact-checking found multiple and familiar false or misleading statements.[562]

Howell, Michigan speech

In a campaign speech in Howell, Michigan, on August 20, 2024, Trump falsely accused Harris of a "vicious, violent overthrow" in replacing Biden as the Democratic presidential nominee. After Biden voluntarily resigned under political pressure, his replacement followed Democratic Party rules and was without violence. Trump also repeated a false claim that no one was killed in the January 6 United States

Capitol attack. Trump incorrectly attributed reclassification of some state crimes to Harris (who as Attorney General of California did not have the power to do so), including those reclassified by voters in 2014 California Proposition 47.[563]

Harris vs. Trump presidential debate

On September 10, 2024, Harris and Trump debated in Philadelphia. During the debate, differently from what CNN did in the previous debate with Joe Biden, the moderators fact-checked live several of Trump's claims.[564] Fact-checkers found that Trump made many false or misleading statements, while Harris made one false and several misleading statements.[565]

Among other false claims, Trump repeated a debunked hoax spread by neo-Nazi groups,[566] right-wing politicians and media figures that immigrants were eating pets in Springfield, Ohio.[567] Moderator David Muir debunked it again on the spot. On September 11, Trump called into Fox & Friends and suggested ABC News should lose its broadcasting license because the moderators fact-checked him.[568] The claim that the moderators' fact-checking demonstrated the debate was rigged against Trump was also spread by his supporters, and itself fact-checked.[564][569][570]

On September 18, at Fox News' show *Gutfeld!*, Trump claimed that the debate's audience had gone "crazy" about him being fact-checked, despite the debate having no live audience; it was unclear whether he was meaning the TV ratings or the TV audience.[571][572][573]

Second term

The Associated Press fact-checked several of Trump's statements from his first week in office, declaring them false and misleading.[574]

Events

Major events during Trump's second presidency that were fact-checked for multiple falsehoods.

Inaugural statements

On January 20, 2025, Trump made his official inaugural address at the Capitol's rotunda, unscripted second and third speeches at the Capitol Visitor Center’s Emancipation Hall and Washington’s Capital One Arena, concluding the day with statements to reporters at the Oval Office. News media and fact-checkers declared Trump made multiple false and misleading statements, mostly repetitions of falsehoods from his campaign. [575]

Sanewashing of Donald Trump

During the 2024 presidential campaign, the unlikelihood of some of Trump's falsehoods—for example, that images of Harris's campaign crowds were generated by AI; that in Springfield, Ohio, illegal immigrants were eating' neighbors' pets; or that schoolchildren were receiving surgery to change their gender — and the incoherence of his answers and unscripted addresses[576] drew attention from experts and the media, who questioned Trump's mental state and fitness to serve.[577]

On September 5, 2024, Trump addressed the Economic Club of New York, where he was asked, "If you win in November, can you commit to prioritizing legislation to make childcare affordable, and if so, what specific piece of legislation would you advance?" Trump answered:

> "Well, I would do that, and we're sitting down, and I was, somebody, we had Senator Marco Rubio, and my daughter Ivanka was so impactful on that issue. It's a very important issue. But I think when you talk about the kind of numbers that I'm talking about, that, because, look, child care is child care is. It's, couldn't, you know, there's something, you have to have it. In this country you have to have it.
>
> "But when you talk about those numbers compared to the kind of numbers that I'm talking about by taxing foreign nations at levels that they're not used to—but they'll get used to it very quickly – and it's not gonna stop them from doing business with us, but they'll have a very substantial tax when they send product into our country. Those numbers are so much bigger than any numbers that we're talking about, including child care, that it's going to take care.
> "We're gonna have—I, I look forward to having no deficits within a fairly short period of time, coupled with the reductions that I told you about on waste and fraud and all of the other things that are going on in our country, because I have to stay with child care. I want to stay with child care, but those numbers are small relative to the kind of economic numbers that I'm talking about, including growth, but growth also headed up by what the plan is that I just, that I just told you about.
>
> "We're gonna be taking in trillions of dollars, and as much as child care is talked about as being expensive, it's relatively speaking not very expensive compared to the kind of numbers we'll be taking in. We're going to make this into an incredible country that can afford to take care of its people, and then we'll worry about the rest of the world. Let's help other people. But we're going to take care of our country first. This is about America first. It's about Make America Great Again. We have to do it because right now we're a failing nation, so we'll take care of it."[578][579]

Several news media reports about the event did not mention or comment on that answer,[580][581][582] including *The New York Times*.[583]

That kind of characterization (or lack thereof), plus previous occasions in which the media interpreted Trump's answers instead of transcribing (and fact-checking) them, has been denounced as "sanewashing."[584]

On September 12, 2024, the Poynter Institute defined "sanewashing" as "the act of packaging radical and outrageous statements in a way that makes them seem normal," and proposed ways to avoid doing it.[585]
On October 6, 2024, *The New York Times* published an article reviewing Trump's public statements. A computer analysis found out that Trump's speeches last longer, and include more all-or-nothing, negative, and curse terms, all of which point at cognitive changes since 2015. The analysis found that Trump's speech complexity has remained relatively steady in recent years, at a fourth-grade level. The article presents testimonies of former collaborators and acquaintances, plus comparisons of his present addresses with recordings from years earlier, "clearer and more comprehensible than now, and balanced with flashes of humor." The article notes that the Trump campaign has refused to release his medical records,

and ends with a quote of his from a rally: "Trump is never wrong. I am never, ever wrong."[586][587] On October 15, *The Washington Post* noted that recent polls showed that Trump's age and mental acuity were of increasing concern for voters, though it is not clear whether the same applies to swing voters.[588]

After the election, mainstream media continued to be criticized and accused of sanewashing Trump's most controversial statements.[589]

Public opinion

A June 2019 Gallup poll found that 34% of American adults think Trump "is honest and trustworthy".[590]

A March 2020 Kaiser Family Foundation poll estimated that 19% of Democrats and 88% of Republicans trusted Trump to provide reliable information on COVID-19.[591]

A May 2020 SRSS poll for CNN concluded that 36% of people in the U.S. trusted Trump on information about the COVID-19 outbreak: 4% of Democrats compared to 84% of Republicans.[592]

In April 2022, Trump stated at a rally in Selma, North Carolina: "I think I'm the most honest human being, perhaps, that God ever created," prompting laughter from the crowd.[593]

In two 2023 polls, Trump was thought to be "honest" by 29% of respondents (March 2023; a low since Quinnipiac University first asked this question of registered voters in November 2016)[594] and 36% of respondents (November 2023; George Washington University Politics Poll).[595]

A house in Goffstown, New Hampshire displays a sign endorsing Kamala Harris in the 2024 Presidential Election which parodies "Make America Great Again" as "Make Lying Wrong Again" in response to Trump's record of misinformation.

In a September 2024 Associated Press/NORC at the University of Chicago survey, a majority (57%) of Americans believed that claims from Trump and his campaign are "rarely" or "never" based on facts.[596][597]

See also

Politics portal

- Post-truth politics
- Reality distortion field
- Trump derangement syndrome
- Trumpism
- Truth sandwich
- Veracity of statements by Boris Johnson

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'Even New Zealand, you see what's going on in New Zealand,' he said. 'They beat it they beat, it was like front page [news] they beat it because they wanted to show me something. 'The problem is [there is a] big surge in New Zealand, you know it's terrible—we don't want that. [...]' "
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"ABC News moderators David Muir and Linsey Davis fact-checked Donald Trump during Tuesday night's presidential debate, quickly correcting the record for millions watching at home after the Republican pushed falsehoods on abortion, migrants and the 2020 election.
The decision to live fact-check the candidates during the high-stakes telecast marked a departure from recent debates and stood in contrast to the first presidential matchup of the 2024 season, hosted by CNN and moderated by anchors Jake Tapper and Dana Bash.
During the June debate, the moderators did not correct false claims made by Trump and President Joe Biden. Instead, the network provided a fact check online and on television following the telecast.
Ahead of Tuesday night's debate in Philadelphia, ABC News did not commit to live fact-checking, but as the event got underway both anchors stepped in to debunk false claims made by Trump on at least three occasions. (...) ABC's decision to live fact-check Trump from the stage drew the ire of his allies and those in right-wing media, who claimed the moderators were ignoring Harris' inaccuracies.
"Weird how the hack moderators at @abcnews are only 'Fact checking' Trump and allowing Kamala to lie nonstop. The Fake News is the enemy of the people!" Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr. wrote on X.
"MORE FACT CHECKING FROM ABC – THIS IS THE WORST ANCHOR PILE-ON I HAVE EVER SEEN. 3 against 1," Megyn Kelly, the former Fox News and NBC host turned conservative podcaster, wrote on X."

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  Harris was far more accurate than Trump; CNN's preliminary count found just one false claim from the vice president, though she also added some claims that were misleading or lacking in key context." `{{cite web}}: |author=` has generic name (help)
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568. Dan Ladden-Hall (September 11, 2024). "Trump Demands ABC Be Shut Down for Daring to Fact Check Debate" (https://www.thedailybeast.com/trump-demands-abc-be-shut-down-for-daring-to-fact-check-debate). *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved September 11, 2024. " "I think ABC took a big hit last night," he continued. "To be honest, they're a news organization—they have to be licensed to do it. They ought to take away their license for the way they did that." Trump used the interview to repeatedly complain that the debate was "three-to-one," meaning he felt that moderators David Muir and Linsey Davis were on Harris' side against him. [Includes video]"
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570. Jordan Liles (September 19, 2024). "No, Linsey Davis Didn't Say Debate Fact-Checking Was Planned Only for Trump, Not Harris" (https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/linsey-davis-debate-fact-check-trump/). Snopes. Retrieved September 21, 2024. "Following the ABC News U.S. presidential debate on Sept. 10, 2024, the conservative blog Chicks on the Right published an article claiming that one of the network's two debate moderators—anchor Linsey Davis—said she and her co-moderator, David Muir, planned in advance to fact-check only statements by former President Donald Trump. (...) The Chicks on the Right post included information sourced from a Sept. 13 Fox News story [*ABC's Linsey Davis admits fact-checking of Trump was because CNN let his statements 'hang' at first debate*, by Gabriel Hays; re-published by the *New York Post* on September 14.]. That story sourced its material from a Los Angeles Times article published on Sept. 11—the day after the debate. The Times' story featured an interview with Davis, as well as a profile of her career."
571. Myriam Page (September 19, 2024). "Trump claims audience 'went crazy' for him at his debate with Harris – but there was no audience" (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-audience-harris-debate-gutfeld-b2615455.html). *The Independent*. Retrieved September 21, 2024. " "They didn't correct her once. And they corrected me, everything I said, practically. I think nine times or 11 times," he told Greg Gutfeld.
Trump then referred to the nonexistent audience.
"And the audience was absolutely—they went crazy," he said.
One of the rules of the September 10 debate was that there would be no live audience, in addition to the candidate's microphones being switched off when they weren't answering questions and that they could not wear earpieces.
Social media went into a frenzy following Trump's comments on the Fox News show. (...) It is unclear if Trump was referring to the TV ratings when he spoke about the "crazy" audience."
572. Flynn Nicholls (September 19, 2024). "Donald Trump's Debate Crowd Comment Sparks Confusion: 'They Went Crazy' " (https://www.newsweek.com/trump-praises-nonexistent-debate-crowd-they-went-crazy-1956251). Newsweek. Retrieved September 21, 2024. "Donald Trump has said that when he got fact-checked by moderators during his presidential debate with Kamala Harris, the audience "went crazy." But there was no audience at the debate hosted by ABC.
Appearing on the Fox News show Gutfeld! on Wednesday, the Republican presidential nominee said the "audience" reacted to his unfair treatment during the debate against the vice president.
"They didn't correct her [Harris] once and they corrected me," Trump said. "Everything I said, practically, I think 9 times or 11 times. And the audience was absolutely, they went crazy." (...) There was no audience present at the live broadcast. It's possible the former president was referring to TV audiences. [Includes video]"
573. Nicholas Liu (September 19, 2024). " "Delusional and unsettling": Trump forgets there was no debate audience, claims crowd "went crazy" " (https://www.salon.com/2024/09/19/delusional-and-unsettling-forgets-there-was-no-debate-audience-claims-crowd-went-crazy/). *Salon.com*. Retrieved September 21, 2024. "Former President Donald Trump appeared on a taped segment of Fox News' "Gutfeld!" Wednesday, complaining once again that the ABC News debate moderators bothered to fact-check him while falsely claiming that the debate audience "went crazy" for his performance. (...) MSNBC anchor Chris Hayes argued that the Republican candidate's remark validated concerns about his age and mental capacity. "Trump talking about 'the audience' at the debate (where there famously was no audience) is more delusional and unsettling than any moment of Joe Biden misspeaking all year and it's not close," Hayes wrote on social media."

574. Melissa Goldin (January 24, 2025). "FACT FOCUS: A look at false and misleading claims made by Trump during his first week back in office" (https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-fact-focus-first-week-president-claims-4b60d31b3209e98e63ec383d3f4052dc). Associated Press. Retrieved January 31, 2025. "President Donald Trump stepped back into the presidency this week moving quickly to set a new agenda, but from his inaugural address continuing through a flurry of executive actions, press conferences and interviews Trump relied on an array of false and misleading information to support his case. Here's a closer look at the facts."

575. Multiple sources

- "Fact Check: Donald Trump's inaugural speech examined" (https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/donald-trumps-inaugural-speech-examined-2025-01-20/). Reuters. January 20, 2025. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "Reuters assessed seven statements made by President Donald Trump during his inaugural address on Monday. While we monitored the speech in its entirety, we did not examine opinions or policy pledges. The statements are listed with timestamps in Eastern Standard Time (ET)."
- Léonie Chao-Fong, Guardian staff (January 20, 2025). "Factchecking Trump's inauguration speech, from inflation to healthcare" (https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/20/trump-inaugural-address-factcheck). *The Guardian*. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "Donald Trump repeatedly made false and misleading claims during his inaugural address.
  Here are the facts on some of the false claims offered during Trump's speech."
- Zachary B. Wolf, Curt Merrill (January 20, 2025). "Trump's inaugural address, annotated and fact-checked" (https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/politics/2025/donald-trump-inaugural-speech-dg/). CNN. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "President Donald Trump completed his incredible comeback by delivering his second inaugural address in the rotunda of the US Capitol. Before closing with a pledge to bind the nation and unify Americans, he borrowed lines from his campaign speeches and he promised broad changes in US government, to guard against an invasion at the southern border and to rename the Gulf of Mexico.
  Here's Trump's second inaugural address with context and with multiple fact checks from CNN's Fact Check team."
- Glenn Kessler (January 20, 2025). "Fact-checking President Trump's 2025 inaugural address. Trump relies on many claims debunked during the election campaign" (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/01/20/fact-checking-president-trumps-2025-inaugural-address/). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "Inaugural addresses, with their emphasis on lofty rhetoric, are generally not fertile ground for fact-checking. But President Donald Trump's 2025 inauguration speech was more akin to a State of the Union address, with a laundry list of proposals and plans — and a hefty dose of false claims that we've fact-checked before. Here's a quick rundown of what was inaccurate or misleading in Trump's address, in the order in which he made the claims. We'll ignore rhetoric that is expressed more as an opinion — "for many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens" — even though the factual basis for such statements is thin."
- Robert Farley, D'Angelo Gore, Jessica McDonald, Catalina Jaramillo, Lori Robertson, Alan Jaffe, Saranac Hale Spencer, Ben Cohen, Ian Fox, Logan Chapman (January 20, 2025). "FactChecking Trump's Inaugural Address" (https://www.factcheck.org/2025/01/factchecking-trumps-inaugural-address/). FactCheck.org. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "Summary. In a half-hour inaugural address, newly sworn-in President Donald Trump twisted some facts while painting the last few years under his predecessor, Joe Biden, as a time of "decline" and promising that "the golden age of America begins right now." We also flagged a few falsehoods in Trump's subsequent remarks to supporters in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol."

- Daniel Dale (January 20, 2025). "Fact check: Trump made more than 20 false claims in his Inauguration Day remarks" (https://edition.cnn.com/politics/fact-check-trump-inauguration/index.html). CNN. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "President Donald Trump made only a smattering of false claims in his inaugural address on Monday, mostly sticking to vague rhetoric, subjective assertions and uncheckable promises of action.
  But then he embarked on a lying spree.
  In an unscripted second speech on Monday, to supporters who had gathered in the US Capitol Visitor Center's Emancipation Hall, Trump made false claims about elections, immigration and the Capitol riot on January 6, 2021, among other subjects. He then made additional false claims in a freewheeling third speech at Washington's Capital One Arena and again while speaking to reporters as he signed executive orders in the Oval Office.
  Here is a fact check of some of his Monday claims."
- Linda Qiu (January 20, 2025). "Trump Repeats Inaccurate Claims in Inaugural Remarks. In his Inaugural Address, President Trump delivered a more tempered version of election talking points. But in remarks afterward, he reprised his grievances about the 2020 election" (https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/20/us/politics/trump-fact-check-inaugural-address.html). *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "President Trump began his second administration much as he left the first one, falsely questioning the outcome of the 2020 election and berating the criminal justice system in remarks throughout the day.
  In his inaugural remarks, Mr. Trump delivered a more tempered version of election talking points, including inaccurate claims about the state of the economy, immigration, world affairs, and federal and local investigations into his own conduct.
  But in addressing supporters afterward at the Capitol Rotunda, he reprised his grievances about the 2020 election, falsely blaming Nancy Pelosi for security lapses and asserting, incorrectly, that the election had been rigged.
  Here's a fact-check."
- The Associated Press (January 21, 2025). "FACT FOCUS: A look at false and misleading claims Trump made at inaugural events" (https://apnews.com/article/trump-inauguration-fact-check-b920161868e192d0430df534a42ea5ce). Associated Press. Retrieved January 30, 2025. "In his first address after being sworn in on Monday, President Donald Trump repeated several false and misleading statements that he made during his campaign. They included claims about immigration, the economy, electric vehicles and the Panama Canal. In remarks later at the Capitol's Emancipation Hall, he issued a number of other false claims, including one that distorts pardons made by President Joe Biden as he left office. Here's a look at the facts."

576. Multiple sources:

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- Edith Olmsted (July 10, 2024). "Watch: Trump Fumbles Repeatedly in Terrifying Speech at Florida Rally" (https://newrepublic.com/post/183641/watch-trump-fumbles-terrifying-speech-florida-rally). *The New Republic*. The New Republic. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Donald Trump gave a particularly incoherent speech during a recent rally, as he rattled through a lengthy list of odd grievances that didn't quite ring true, devoid of some very necessary segues. [Includes video]"
- Tom Nichols (June 12, 2024). "Let's Talk About Trump's Gibberish. What the former president's shark tirade says about American politics and media" (https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/06/trump-sharks-las-vegas-rally-speech/678667/). The Atlantic. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "For too long, Trump has gotten away with pretending that his emotional issues are just part of some offbeat New York charm or an expression of his enthusiasm for public performance. But Trump is obviously unfit—and something is profoundly wrong with a political environment in which he can now say almost anything, no matter how weird, and his comments will get a couple of days of coverage and then a shrug, as if to say: Another day, another Trump rant about sharks."
- Erin Doherty (June 24, 2024). "Trump's weird words: What's behind his rally rants" (https://www.axios.com/2024/06/24/trump-weird-words-rally-rants-biden-2024-election). Axios. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Why it matters: Trump's bombastic speeches have always mixed anger, falsehoods, conspiracy theories and vague, sweeping plans. But recently he's gone deeper into bizarre tales and vulgarities."
- Marianne LeVine (October 14, 2024). "Trump sways and bops to music for 39 minutes in bizarre town hall episode. Vice President Kamala Harris has called Trump, 78, unstable and questioned his mental acuity" (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/10/14/trump-music-sways-town-hall/). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved October 15, 2024. "The town hall, moderated by South Dakota Gov. Kristi L. Noem (R), began with questions from preselected attendees for the former president. Donald Trump offered meandering answers on how he would address housing affordability and help small businesses. But it took a sudden turn after two attendees required medical attention. (...) For 39 minutes, Trump swayed, bopped — sometimes stopping to speak — as he turned the event into almost a living-room listening session of his favorite songs from his self-curated rally playlist.
  He played nine tracks. He danced. He shook hands with people onstage. He pointed to the crowd. Noem stood beside him, nodding with her hands clasped. Trump stayed in place onstage, slowly moving back and forth. He was done answering questions for the night.
  "Total lovefest at the PA townhall! Everyone was so excited they were fainting so @realDonaldTrump turned to music," campaign spokesman Steven Cheung wrote on X. "Nobody wanted to leave and wanted to hear more songs from the famous DJT Spotify playlist!" [Includes video]"

577. Multiple sources:

- Olivia Goldhill (August 7, 2024). "Trump keeps losing his train of thought. Cognitive experts have theories about why" (https://www.statnews.com/2024/08/07/trump-mental-health-linguistic-analysis-suggests-potential-cognitive-decline-experts-say/). STAT. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "(...) This shifting from topic to topic, with few connections—a pattern of speech called tangentiality—is one of several disjointed and occasionally incoherent verbal habits that seem to have increased in Trump's speech in recent years, according to interviews with experts in memory, psychology, and linguistics."
- Gustaf Kilander (August 8, 2024). "Experts say Trump's speaking style shows 'potential indications of cognitive decline' " (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/donald-trump-cognitive-decline-election-2024-b2593296.html). *The Independent*. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Former President Donald Trump's speaking style may reveal signs of cognitive decline, according to psychological experts. An analysis by STAT—a media organization focusing on health —found that Trump's common pattern of speech called tangentiality—jumping from topic to topic with few if any connections in between—is just one of a number of incoherent speaking habits that appears to have worsened in the last few years."
- Lee Siegel (September 2, 2024). "Donald Trump is losing it. His alarming cognitive decline deserves the scrutiny that Joe Biden received" (https://www.newstatesman.com/us-election-2024/2024/09/donald-trump-is-losing-it). New Statesman. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "The process of removing Biden as the Democratic presidential candidate can't exactly be said to have worked well, but it worked. And now it's time for Americans to turn the same self-regulatory instincts to Biden's 78-year-old former rival. Trump's campaign is already falling apart—most recently with the shameful attempt to use a ceremony at Arlington Cemetery as an electioneering platform. But there are deeper reasons to inspect Trump's political credibility now. Because cognitively speaking, Trump is beginning to make Biden look like Oscar Wilde."
- Steve Inskeep, John McWhorter (September 13, 2024). "Breaking down former President Donald Trump's rambling linguistic style" (https://www.npr.org/2024/09/13/nx-s1-5107714/breaking-down-former-president-donald-trumps-rambling-linguistic-style). NPR. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Linguist John McWhorter speaks with Steve Inskeep about Donald Trump's "weaving" style of speech. [Interview with transcription] (...) MCWHORTER: (Laughter) No. I mean, what he's describing does sound rather deft, as if he's just juggling a whole bunch of things because perhaps he's such a fertile mind. But really, what happens is he thinks of a second, and that makes him think of a third. Then he has to make some off-handed remark. And then usually, he then jumps rather parenthetically back to the first thing. That's not weaving. That's rambling, the verbal equivalent of somebody being extremely drunk."
- Richard A. Friedman (September 12, 2024). "Trump's Repetitive Speech Is a Bad Sign. If the debate was a cognitive test, the former president failed" (https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2024/09/trump-harris-debate-cognitive-decline/679803/). The Atlantic. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Just to be clear: Although I am a psychiatrist, I am not offering any specific medical diagnoses for any public figure. I have never met or examined either candidate. But I watched the debate with particular attention to the candidates' vocabulary, verbal and logical coherence, and ability to adapt to new topics—all signs of a healthy brain. Although Kamala Harris certainly exhibited some rigidity and repetition, her speech remained within the normal realm for politicians, who have a reputation for harping on their favorite talking points. By contrast, Donald Trump's expressions of those tendencies were alarming. He displayed some striking, if familiar, patterns that are commonly seen among people in cognitive decline."

578. Alex Woodward (September 5, 2024). "Trump tried to explain how he plans to make childcare more affordable. It was a word salad" (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-childcare-economy-speech-b2607970.html). *The Independent*. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "The Republican nominee gave a two-minute, 362-word response [Includes video]"
579. Zachary B. Wolf (September 6, 2024). "Trump's rambling answer to a child care question, deconstructed" (https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/06/politics/child-care-trump-what-matters/index.html). CNN. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "His response to the child care question, the subject of some ribbing by his political opponents, could accurately be described as a ramble without an answer. It's worth looking closer at an issue that affects so many Americans."
580. Brett Samuels (September 5, 2024). "5 takeaways from Trump's economic address in New York" (https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/4863990-trump-economic-agenda-elon-musk-commission-immigration-crackdown-tariffs/). *The Hill*. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Former President Trump on Thursday outlined his economic agenda if he is elected in November, doubling down on many of the policies that he leaned on during his first four years in office and vowing to undo numerous Biden administration moves."
581. Gram Slattery, Helen Coster (September 5, 2024). "What new proposals did Trump make during his economic speech?" (https://www.reuters.com/world/us/what-new-proposals-did-trump-make-during-his-economic-speech-2024-09-05/). Reuters. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump laid out his economic vision for the country on Thursday during a speech at the New York Economic Club."
582. Jill Colvin, Adriana Gomez Licon, Josh Boak (September 5, 2024). "Trump suggests tariffs can help solve rising child care costs in a major economic speech" (https://apnews.com/article/trump-economy-harris-corporate-taxes-15ba5ecfdf5e907bd9b2c349b07222b8). Associated Press. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Trump was asked at his appearance before the Economic Club of New York about his plans to drive down child care costs to help more women join the workforce.
"Child care is child care, it's something you have to have in this country. You have to have it," he said. Then, he said his plans to tax imports from foreign nations at higher levels would "take care" of such problems.
"We're going to be taking in trillions of dollars, and as much as child care is talked about as being expensive, it's—relatively speaking—not very expensive, compared to the kind of numbers we'll be taking in," he said."
583. Jonathan Weisman (September 5, 2024). "Trump Praises Tariffs, and William McKinley, to Power Brokers" (https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/05/us/politics/trump-tariffs-william-mckinley.html). *The New York Times*. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "His solution for the deficit? Tariffs. The crisis for middle-class families struggling with child care? The economic growth he said would be spurred by things like tariffs. A complicated international supply chain that has the wings of military aircraft manufactured in one country and the tail in another? Tariffs."

584. Multiple sources:

- Parker Molloy (September 4, 2024). "How the Media Sanitizes Trump's Insanity" (https://newrepublic.com/article/185530/media-criticism-trump-sanewashing-problem). *The New Republic*. The New Republic. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "(...) This "sanewashing" of Trump's statements isn't just poor journalism; it's a form of misinformation that poses a threat to democracy. By continually reframing Trump's incoherent and often dangerous rhetoric as conventional political discourse, major news outlets are failing in their duty to inform the public and are instead providing cover for increasingly erratic behavior from a former—and potentially future—president."
- Jon Allsop (September 9, 2024). "Is the press 'sanewashing' Trump?" (https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/trump_incoherent_media_sanewashing.php). Columbia Journalism Review. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "There's a hot new term doing the rounds among media critics: "sanewashing." The term itself actually isn't new, and it wasn't born in media-criticism circles, per se; according to Urban Dictionary, it was coined in 2020 on a Reddit page for neoliberals (which Linda Kinstler wrote about recently for CJR), and meant "attempting to downplay a person or idea's radicality to make it more palatable to the general public." (It was deployed in discussions around, for example, "defunding the police.") Recently, though, various observers have applied the term to media coverage of Donald Trump. Aaron Rupar, a journalist who is very active on X, has been credited with coining "sanewashing" in this specific context, but the term appeared to really blow up last week, after Parker Molloy wrote a column about it in The New Republic. (She expanded on the idea as a guest on the podcast Some More News.) The word has since been picked up by media bigwigs including Paul Krugman and Rachel Maddow, and appeared in outlets from Ireland to India."
- Will Bunch (September 10, 2024). "GOP red states launch a war on voting rights. Will Bunch Newsletter. Plus, how "sanewashing" became 2024′s word of the year in politics" (https://www.inquirer.com/columnists/attytood/trump-desantis-voting-rights-sanewashing-20240910.html). The Philadelphia Inquirer. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "Backstory on how "sanewashing" became 2024′s word of the year.
  Maybe it was when the New York Times wrote a straight-faced story about housing policy in the presidential race that treated Donald Trump's authoritarian scheme for the mass deportation of millions of undocumented immigrants as a plan to lower rents. Or when multiple outlets failed to make any kind of big deal about the GOP nominee's utterly bat-guano crazy assertion that kids are going to school and getting gender-reassignment operations there, without their parents knowing about it. It probably peaked with Trump's lengthy and totally incoherent answer to a question about his child-care policy—"Child care is child care!" he blurted out at one point—which was initially characterized by the Times as, "Trump Praises Tariffs, and William McKinley, to Power Brokers."
  There's a word for this. "Sanewashing." "
- Zachary Pleat (September 12, 2024). "Conservative economic commentators have been "sanewashing" Trump's incoherent tariff proposals" (https://www.mediamatters.org/cnbc/conservative-economic-commentators-have-been-sanewashing-trumps-incoherent-tariff-proposals). Media Matters for America. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "After economists explained Trump's tariff ideas would raise inflation and cost families thousands annually, Trump's allies began claiming it has always been a bluff."

- Joel Mathis (September 13, 2024). "Is the media 'sanewashing' Trump? Critics say there's a disconnect between 'reality and reported news' " (https://theweek.com/politics/media-sanewashing-trump-speeches). The Week. Retrieved September 25, 2024. "(...) Trump, naturally, has a different take: He calls his rhetorical style "the weave," Margaret Hartmann said at New York magazine. "I'll talk about like nine different things, and they all come back brilliantly together," he said last month at a Pennsylvania rally, "and it's like, friends of mine that are, like, English professors, they say, 'It's the most brilliant thing I've ever seen.'" (...) Trump's campaign insists his speaking style is proof of rhetorical mastery. "Unlike Kamala Harris," a campaign spokesperson told The New York Times, "President Trump speaks for hours, telling multiple impressive stories at the same time." But the former president has gotten defensive about how his remarks are reported. "The fake news, you know what they say? 'He rambled.'" Trump said this month. "That's not rambling." The skeptics remain. "He is trying to pretend there is a strategy or logic behind it," said one biographer, "when there isn't." "

585. Kelly McBride (September 12, 2024). "How to avoid sanewashing Trump (and other politicians)" (https://www.poynter.org/ethics-trust/2024/sanewashing-meaning-donald-trump-journalists/). Poynter Institute. Retrieved September 12, 2024. "There's been a lot of chatter about how the press—maybe deliberately and maybe inadvertently—makes Trump sound more coherent and normal. The clever word to describe this: sanewashing. Like greenwashing (taking superficial actions in the name of helping the environment), or sportswashing (using sporting events to burnish one's reputation and gloss over corruption or human rights abuses), sanewashing is the act of packaging radical and outrageous statements in a way that makes them seem normal.
Critics accuse many in journalism of doing just that."
586. Peter Baker, Dylan Freedman (October 6, 2024). "Trump's Speeches, Increasingly Angry and Rambling, Reignite the Question of Age" (https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/06/us/politics/trump-speeches-age-cognitive-decline.html). *The New York Times*. Retrieved October 8, 2024. "With the passage of time, the 78-year-old former president's speeches have grown darker, harsher, longer, angrier, less focused, more profane and increasingly fixated on the past, according to a review of his public appearances over the years. [Includes short videos]"
587. Mika Brzezinski, Joe Scarborough, Peter Baker (October 7, 2024). *How Trump's speeches reignite the question of age* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiCVnkkJoSM) (Internet video). MSNBC. Retrieved October 8, 2024. "[Interview with Peter Baker about his article]"
588. Aaron Blake (October 15, 2024). "How big a political problem is mental acuity for Trump?" (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/10/15/how-big-problem-is-mental-acuity-trump/). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved October 15, 2024. "How concerned are Americans about Trump's mental faculties?
The answer appears to be: increasingly concerned, and large numbers of people have long doubted his stability. But it's not clear that swing voters are overly concerned, and Trump's numbers in that realm are nowhere close to Biden's.
Let's take that first part. Few polls have regularly tested views of Trump's age and mental faculties. But the ones that do have shown a modest but steady erosion for Trump on those measures. [Pollers: Reuters/Ipsos, Pew Research Center, Marquette University Law School (Wisconsin), Marquette's national polling.] (...) That gets at the potential danger for Trump. He benefits in some respects because people have come to expect the bizarre from him. But we've also seen how his chaotic style — including after the 2020 election — can give people real pause. He's more popular today than he was during his presidency, but casual voters are starting to see more of him and consuming more of his strange behavior.
That has not generally been a recipe for his success; it's why Harris's campaign has repeatedly urged people to watch Trump's rallies and is now playing his remarks on big screens at her rallies. (...)"

589. Multiple sources:

- Tom Jones (November 8, 2024). "Opinion. Donald Trump and the media: a look back and a look ahead to the next four years. Four media experts and analysts discuss how the press covered Trump in this election cycle and what to expect going forward" (https://www.poynter.org/commentary/2024/what-to-expect-next-trump-presidency-media/). Poynter Institute. Retrieved February 12, 2025. "The bubble of conservative-oriented media has distorted what many people even believe is fair news coverage and increased the amount of misinformation and disinformation in the public space. But I think one of the biggest problems facing mainstream news outlets now is the belief among nonconservative consumers that coverage of this election cycle let them down by "sanewashing" and normalizing Trump's excesses. Traditional journalists who have already lost the confidence of conservative consumers are now facing diminishing trust from the news consumers who are left, which is not a great combination."
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External links

Fact-checker archives

- Donald Trump (https://www.politifact.com/personalities/donald-trump/) at PolitiFact
- Donald Trump (https://www.factcheck.org/person/donald-trump/) at FactCheck.org
- Donald Trump (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/category/donald-trump/) at *The Washington Post*
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